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The true story
behind
**INCOMING
FRESHMEN**



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INCOMING FRESHMAN: THE TRUE STORY ABOUT THE VIRGINIA YOU'LL NEVER SEE

By M. Whelan

The opening shot of *INCOMING FRESHMAN* is a close up of a cat—read into that what you will. We start right away with main character Jane Hallister answering a letter she's written to her new roommate Vivian. Jane's coming to college from Sweet Briar, a northeastern slightly elite west of Naples, and it's clear she's never been to the big city before. She likes books about dogs, was the assistant literary editor of her high school paper, and has a boyfriend named Steve whom she's never gone all the way with but who has promised to stay true to her while she's away at college. She cries before getting on the bus and is equal parts excited and scared. She's the type of girl that can love to imagine herself an artichoke country girl who's beautiful but naive, guileless and serious.

Vivian, however, is the kind of girl every one wants to meet. You get the feeling when she got to college she never looked back, and she's in bed with a guy when Jane shows up—Jane's first life lesson. When Jane runs away in embarrassment Viv catches up to her and then gently calms her by falsely claiming the guy wanted to apologize but was too ashamed, which embarrasses Jane and puts her on the defensive.

If Jane wants to learn about men, she got the right roommate. Viv has dreams of men calling her in midway to a list of missed calls about the first names of famous film directors, an in-joke detail that embarrasses the filmmakers today! but she refuses to commit to any one in particular, which bewilders the traditionally minded Jane.

This traditionalism is why, initially, Jane doesn't want to learn about men. She's got Steve back home and he's all she needs. But when Steve doesn't call the first night as promised, Jane calls her best friend Cindy to find out why and discovers that Steve has already moved on—and is spending the night at Cindy's house. This breaks her heart but leaves her unattached, which is a perfect place to be in to be taken under the wing of more experienced girls.

Despite their contrasting personalities, Viv and Jane become friends, with the more worldly brunette teaching the blonde country girl how to be a woman. Her first formal lesson to Jane is about how it's okay to date outside your boyfriend, which Jane instinctively rejects. Christy, a baldy and bossy feminist, tries to convince Jane of the worthlessness of men, but Jane doesn't fall for this either. For most of the movie, Jane finds herself pushing back against the attitudes and behavior of her peers, leaving her isolated and confused.

Running parallel to Jane's story is the plight of Randy, another virginal freshman whose nerdishness sometimes seems to channel Woody Allen. He's trying to score with Jane but is continually frustrated by her unwillingness to hook up with him, despite the fact that she admits to liking him. On the advice of some friends who state that girls always put out at the drive in, he takes her to one like twelve of the notorious services in the double feature, *HIGH CALL SEX* and *MY CHICK HITS*, parody the type of movie *INCOMING FRESHMAN* was trying not to be, only to have her ruin the night by spilling hot buttered popcorn on the front of his pants.

This isn't the only spill he endures. In the film's most suggestive and ironic scene, the sexually shy Randy inadvertently squirts a tube of toothpaste down the front of his shirt while fantasizing about a girl in a tube top he'd seen earlier that day.

Most of the film is dedicated to showing the true to life experience of freshmen year at college, and trying to find observational humor in the everyday. There's a surprisingly accurate montage of teachers Glenn Morgan, one of the film's creators, plays a political science professor similar to the one Ben Stein would later play in *PERSEUS RATHER THAN GUT*, who rants from the painfully dry to the wildly perky, and a sequence where Jane is invited to join a sorority and wanders around the room at the orientation party looking like a deer in headlights. But rather than portray the sorority girls as stereotypical airheads, the movie stresses the realism of Jane's insertion into a new experience and her unfamiliarity with their cosmopolitan interests and more urban, outgoing personalities.

Similarly skewed of the sex comedy genre is the scene where she and Randy go to a disco and she admits she's interested in him but not ready to have sex. She's clearly out of step with everyone around her, but the movie holds back from criticizing her for it. Instead, it's followed by a series of scenes where Vivian and Christy try to cure Jane of her "regression" by doing things like taking her to a (very 1990s feminist group meeting, where Jane is encouraged to lecture as sexy since as though she were talking to herself as it.

Ultimately Jane blossoms not because of Vivian or Christy but by running away from them. After Viv convinces Jane to ditch Randy after a football game, the two girls go to a party at a chalet deep in the mountains, where Jane is hit on by a succession of increasingly grotesque men. Finally she can't take it anymore and flies into the woods in an attempt to shake off the unsavory college culture that makes her so uncomfortable. Upon reaching a backroad, she's picked up by a man on a motorcycle whose face we never see and whose voice we never hear. The two of them take love all night in front of a fireplace, and the movie ends with the now liberated Jane confident in her sexuality, represented by a closing montage of scenes of her fooling around with different men and her voiceover narrating a letter home explaining how she's grown.

What's interesting about *INCOMING FRESHMAN* is how innocent it all is, given the subject matter. There are no cheap attempts at humor at the expense of the characters' dignity or inconsistent, out-of-character behavior done for as easy laugh. Viv explains to Jane how to flirt with professors, but is never shown sleeping with any of them. There's no sexual sex, and barely any nudity, in part because the filmmakers found it difficult to get women as conservative Knoxville to doff their tops for them. And yet for the most part the movie works.

Its sensitivity to Jane is somewhat surprising, considering the fact that it was written and directed by two young men who had just graduated college. Co-writers, directors, cinematographers and producers Eric Leinold and Glenn Morgan had been friends since their own freshmen year in the film program at the University of Tennessee. Morgan remembers, "When we graduated from film school we

actually got film degrees without a film school? We looked at each other and said 'what next?' Our first thought was to make a short film, but we knew we could never raise or realize any money from it. So we thought about doing something more financially realistic like applying for grants for short films. We also knew we didn't have the skills, experience, or resources to make a good film, even if we had a good idea. So why not out our teeth on a fun project that we could learn from, hopefully make some money on, then work our way toward making the highest quality films we aspired to, but never did we think we were slacking or took down on what we were doing. They found two friends to loan them money and planned to shoot it in the fall after graduation. They had an overall concept of the movie and the characters, and had written a few scenes when they met, but wrote the rest and finished it out after casting. The total amount they raised, \$25,000, Lewis adds. "In 1975 we was no possible market for a purely serious indie/art film. \$25,000 was a lot of money for us and our friends and family, so having a chance of getting it back was a top priority."

In a local television interview not long after filming wrapped, Lewis and Morgan admitted their research for *INNOVING FREEDOM* consisted of watching "Titties or Tents" drive in movies. The sex comedy genre was chosen because it was cheap, easy, and "the lowest common denominator of movie audiences. The R rated drive in market." The main film I remember: Morgan was today, "was POM-POM GIRLS with Robert Carmichael. He thought it had good characters, I believe, and it did good business, so that's one we probably held up as an example of what we could do. It was also just barely R rated; in fact, it was re-released a year or so later with just minor cuts and a PG rating. But we certainly liked other cheapie films that we aspired to. HOLLYWOOD BOYD was certainly inspirational—the idea that you could be funny and ridiculous and commercial and cheap all at the same time, and not sell your soul. We were very enamored of that sort of film coming out of Coen's studio. *HEATH RADE* 2000 too. But we thought a sex comedy with college students was the kind of thing we actually had the resources to do." Lewis's recollection is more subtle of fact: "My memory is that there was no sex movie we liked—just a scene here and there. Our plan was to make a story we liked/enjoy that had the elements necessary—sex, nudity, comedy—to get it sold. We were young and naive enough to think we could back an saleable cinematic with a more serious film." Morgan confides, "If we were kids today, we'd buy a video camera and Final Cut Pro and make some kind of movie we could put on the internet and try to get some attention for what we could do. Back then, shooting ideas was a very expensive proposition."

When the six week shoot was over, Lewis and Morgan premiered a rough cut of the finished film at a picnic in Knoxville and then shipped the film around under the rubric of their company, El Terci Films. Lewis stated before it got distribution that it had been "kissed of being too subtle or maybe not goofy or wild or crazy enough." One thing that particularly seemed to trouble distributors was the ambiguous ending with Jane and the mysterious motorcyclist who defines her, but Morgan doesn't see it as problematic.

"The motorcycle rider is pure idea or mythos. Jane wants desperately to not be a virgin anymore, but she's too self conscious/hung up/whatever to actually bring herself to sleep with Randy or any other real guy. The bike rider allows her to have her own fantasy and move forward. With one full sweep, her problem is solved and she's now willing to be sexual with all the other men around, as well."

"And while it absolutely was a male fantasy (all girls, even reticent ones, want to have sex), it was also a tried and true female fantasy: mystery sex sweeps her off her feet, off into anonymous bliss, with no awkwardness or responsibilities or repercussions in the morning."

Obscure or not, it was totally in keeping with the theme—if not the realistic tone—of the rest of the film, which wasn't too dissimilar from others at the time, and nowhere near as shocking as the end of *Chloe* or *THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN* six years later.

"I think the basic arc was the very first thing we came up with, based largely on a lot of other exploitation films we'd seen, and the expectations of the genre. It's a fairly basic fantasy. I think, the idea that a plain Jane, no matter how virtuous, virginial, Christian, unwilling or inexperienced, can come to fulfill your sexual fantasy by the end, and be willing to put out. Just the idea that any and all girls will come around eventually. It's what we focus in the audience left to think about. There's also a (briefed) feminist angle (which we were totally behind, that Jane has gone from the sheltered, desiring girl, under the thumb of her hometown boyfriend and her own unrealistic ideas of love and romance, to a young woman who has discovered her sexuality and rejects it on her own terms."

One idea that today's more conservative modern audience may have trouble accepting is a female character who's liberated by sleeping around, and Morgan disputes this reaction.

"She's in no way a slut. She's discovered her true self and is enjoying her new found freedom (from her own hangup). We saw her not at all as a victim, but as liberated from her previous upbringing, which had really not served her well at all. She was pretty miserable and confused. I don't think she's quite another Viri. We like to think of her as a little less cynical and more self aware than Viri by the end. Our fantasy of her, I guess, becomes you'd enjoy sleeping with her because, but not just a hot babe or sexual object, that more describes Viri." Lewis continues, "There are probably the mix of motivations we had in mind for Jane. And it is odd to think that 1976 was a liberating time—pre AIDS, pre BOB illegitimacy rate, pre abstinence rings. My only adjustment would be that Jane was fairly confident about the other guys, whether she ever decides to have sex with them or not—definitely a bit of personal growth."

As out of left field as they seem to be upon first viewing, the closing scenes work. It's the one sequence in the movie where the creators' ambitions outpace their B-movie intentions, and it elevates the film around it without being pretentious.

"We definitely hope you'll laugh with her at the end," Morgan states, and "certainly not at her. If you laugh at her, I think we've really failed. Intending to think how differently that might play to today's audience from the one 30 years ago. We wanted it to be a happy ending for everyone involved. Jane, Randy, and the happy guys is the audience."

Randy's happy ending involves his going home with the girl in the tube top that he's lusted after all along

For (Jane) to end up with Randy would simply be a 'top out' romantic comedy ending, and wouldn't serve the genre at all. So we took care of him with the fake top girl (another total fantasy character) who'd worry about Jane anymore if she came and swept you off your feet" Morgan adds. "Interestingly, we got a fair amount of praise from our own peer group for our writing and portrayal of Jane and the other female characters. Most people found her really believable, which was our biggest goal."

Lewald and Morgan showed their rough cut around, but couldn't find any buyers. The lack of nudity and the fact that it was shot on 16mm were contributing factors to its rejection, as well as the filmmakers' naivete about the film market. But eventually they did get an audience with The Cannon Group in New York. Morgan states, "We had no funding clue. They were interested. Our first and only 'business research' was a trip to Atlanta where we met with some local cheapo sub distributors. Slap guys who'd be selling used cars if they somehow hadn't stumbled into 'movie business' along the way. I think they were the guys who handled Grease films in the Southeast. When we told 'em what we were planning to do they said we should talk to Cannon. I also remember them asking if we were going to have any 'cliffhangers' in the film. We said 'Oh, sure' which led to a bit of a fight scene outside the chair in the big final party scene. Cause we thought we needed it."

This led advice led to their initial meeting with Cannon. "We stupidly let their agents' look a very, very rough cut of some scenes we'd cut and never even screened together to show them in FFC. They wanted to see it before anyone else did, and we were too dumb to know it wasn't ready for anyone to see. In the screening room with the guy (his name was Tom Horneen, I think (Horneen ended up taking on 'Executive in Charge of Production' credit on the finished film), we realized how slow and awful it was and what a big mistake we'd made. But we learned a lot, and were happy we hadn't blown it with anyone else. But he told us he liked the title and the fake top fantasy scene, and to keep him in mind if we couldn't sell it elsewhere. Which led us to call him a year later after exhausting other avenues after we finished the film."

Lewald and Morgan were living in Los Angeles at this point, and the loan they'd taken out to complete the picture had come due, so Cannon was their only option.

When we came to Hollywood with the film, in script form, we were referred to an entertainment lawyer. I actually see him in retrospect as the guy who screwed us the most, 'cause he was supposed to be on our side. He didn't sell us out, but we realized a few months later, after seeing how much money and effort they spent to finish the film, they would have just as happily given us \$100,000 (instead of \$500K, which is what we told our lawyer we had to have. We could have made that deal if we had gotten \$100,000, we would have been in profit the day we sold it). He heard later they spent \$150,000 to finish it. Cannon did what they were supposed to they got the best deal they could on our film. They didn't lie to us up front or misrepresent anything. We knew they were our only possibility. We were just surprised that they bought the film, then threw so much of it away. A year or two after our film came out, I read an article in the LA Times about how sort of the people who made or bought ALIEN, which was released the same month as our movie, hadn't seen a script of what they were supposed to get out of that movie. So I didn't feel like we were screwed or any more stupid than anyone else."

Lewald is less forgiving toward Cannon, which at that time was undergoing a change of ownership from Dennis Friedland and Chris Dewey to cousins Bruckner Gilman and Yoram Yookan. "They were all shrewd, slick operators--before and after the sale to Gilman and Stefan. You could write a book based on the dozens of small filmmakers they defrauded. That said, they got our movie International Theatrical release, so no complaints. They weren't easy to deal with, they just lied and stole our money."

But lying and stealing wasn't really all they did. Cannon had basically bought the film for the title and toothpaste sequence and treated the rest like filler. Few movies given a theatrical release have ever suffered as badly at a distributor's hands.

It's true the original version is rough, at least in the script form, which is as far as it ever got. Intimate scenes with two to three characters work better than ones with more complicated blocking. The scenery and festival settings especially needed to be fixed to be releasable. And a subplot involving a character named Earl is underdeveloped to the point of being confusing. "We loved Earl dearly, but that's one of those things we didn't have the skill or understanding to pull him off right. He made a lot more sense in our heads than he did to anyone else who saw the movie," Morgan admits. Nevertheless, what Cannon did to it was more a subplot bombing than a film fiasco.

Cannon hired Francis A. Rose to shoot new scenes in New York. They gave him three days. Rose had done stellar work for Cannon on their 1976 film THE FIVE WIVES GIRL, another independent production the distributor bought and altered before release.

Lewald and Morgan weren't there for the additional shooting, but were optimistic until they saw it. In a fall 1978 interview, after the sale to Cannon but before seeing the final cut, Morgan stated he felt that "fortunately, the people who've picked it up, they were to really appreciate it for what it is and only want to polish it a little bit, which they can do much better than we can." When they finally went to New York to see the finished version, it proved to be a disaster. Morgan said later that seeing the finished cut was "the single most horrible experience" he had in the whole process of making the film. Nevertheless, the co-directors put on their game face for the local media. "They made some changes, some of which are pretty considerable," Morgan told an interviewer just before the premiere. "We're not as pleased with it from a creative standpoint." He also admitted it was a "fairly different movie than what we originally made."

To how bad is the Cannon version of BEYOND FREEDOM? Unfortunately, almost intolerably bad. Some is Jane's innocent opening narration and its juxtaposition with Vivian having sex in their dorm room, editing up their characters' gone are most of their friends and incidental characters, illustrating humorous scenes of daily college life: gone are the professors, and almost every scene where people discuss sex sexual feelings gone are the scenery and festival scenes; gone are the entire last twenty minutes, including the party, the motorcycle mystery man, and Jane's eventual liberation. In terms of footage, about half of the movie is gone, leaving only the titillating or risqué scenes that, devoid of their context, dishonor the director's intentions.

But even this could be blamed if the nearly shot footage had been handled properly. As Morgan admits, "the main factor of this

kind of movie went way up in the 2 or 3 years between our summer of "research" (1976) and our movie getting released (May 1979), which didn't help our chances with distributors." But by any year's standards, what Cannon added was unforgivably terrible.

The new scenes are concentrated in four locations: a classroom, a hallway, a girls' locker room, and, for the finale, the common area of the Beta Tau Tau frat house. All of them are obviously set designed and lit, with the classroom set looking absolutely pathetic. The classroom scenes make up most of the new footage, and they alternate with the original Tennessee scenes (despite having no connection to them). The "star" of these new scenes is the obese Professor Elmo, played by a genuinely unattractive actor using the supposedly hilarious name Ed Colverpeter. Elmo's storylines is right out of a sch—Burt Reynolds made quite a few 1980s while standing in front of his class, the depressed professor can't stop imagining his female students (one of whom is Heidi Furrowed) naked, which drives him mad. These scenes—and the ones where he accidentally gets trapped in the girls' locker room and shower while girls come in to change around him—exist solely to show male breasts in the cheapest manner possible. Elmo has the exaggerated mannerisms of a silent film comedian but none of their grace, and speaks with the most unconvincing Texan—Southern accent possible, as though he was sucking the drive in customers who would be his audience. In fact, the New York scenes are so crude and poorly done that the transitions between them and the Tennessee scenes are almost surreal.

Another example of the new version's awful New York—entirely cultural bigotry is its sybilic—racist character Booker T. Robinson, a black janitor who has lost his manual labor skills since converting to Judaism. The joke, of course, is that blacks are naturally good at menial work like sopping floors, while Jews are not. It's worth noting by way of comparison that the original version had a black character, too, when the directors considered making one of the leads because he was such a funny, natural performer. Needless to say, he was almost entirely cut out of the Cannon version.

The film's new ending is perhaps the biggest "fuck you" that Cannon could have delivered to the filmmakers. Mary Moon, who starred as Jane under the stage name of Ashley Tauscher, had been flown up to New York for the Tennessee scenes, but Leslie Mallock, who played her, tragically died in a car accident before the reboot. Moon's new scenes take place at the first house party that she and Vir's stand—in whose face is never even alluded, which replaces the original version's chaotic party. For most of the remaining time Moon watches satirically as a group of teenage extras eat drunk and "party" to the live band (Canadian stageinger Roger Bartlett, whose song "Food for a Friend" was playing when the kids picked up the film) in the TUDOR CHAIRMAN HOUSEHOLD, which gets to play three full songs. At some point a naked woman jumps out of a hole to celebrate the birthday of a character we've never met before, and a group of half-naked girls try to crash into a phone booth. This wastes about two minutes of screen time.

Then Elmo shows up and things get weird. The Professor declares that he's there to drink sticky, smoke pot and party—he's been liberated like James—and the girls start throwing themselves at him. Then the movie cuts to the band members, who are suddenly—and inexplicably—wearing rubber gowl masks. They launch into a song called "Do the Gowl" and the crowd starts dancing wildly. Elmo comes over to Jane and sits down next to her. After spying her for a minute he motions for her to follow him into the back room. He considers this for a second, shrugs a "why the hell not?" shrug, and follows him. Cut to black, and again.

INCREASING FURROWED was finally released in the spring of 1979, two and a half years after it was filmed and in the wake of ANIMAL HOUSE. It premiered on April 12th at the Twin Aire Drive-In in Knoxville with CHERIELEIGH BEACH PARTY on the bill, under it, but played around the country on first run with GAS PUMP GUNDS—which neither Morgan nor Lewell ever saw—and later with similar low budget fare like THE INCREDIBLY WEIRD AND MURDER A strong feelings for that type of movie echo his for the Cannon version of INCREASING FURROWED: "most of these films were a lot more like the release version of our film made by backs with contempt for the audience, featuring appalling 30 year old actresses playing 15 year old co—eds, their only appeal being that they're willing to take their tops off. And main characters like Professor Elmo—who on earth does he have any appeal to in the world?"

But even after it had exhausted the drive in circuit, INCREASING FURROWED had a long life. It played theatrically and on TV in Europe, and was widely distributed on video in the US on the MCA label. It was still playing on late night cable in the early 1980s, showing that good releases the Cannon oeuvre were. It's since appeared as a bootleg DVD set of "bitch party" scenes, despite the fact that no one in the movie ever wore a top. That doesn't matter much, though, since nothing and no one depicted in the original one-sheet is actually in the movie, either.

Unsurprisingly, little of the proceeds from INCREASING FURROWED's showings and airings ever came the filmmakers' way. Beyond the initial eight thousand dollars they got for the sale to Cannon—a regrettably small sum Morgan now feels could have been tripled if they'd had proper legal advice at the time—Hogan and Lewell would each receive only one hundred dollars each, in 1981. Their lawyers were effectively left to split eleven hundred dollars. El Tet's investor report of July 25, 1983 states:

"Our first return from Cannon represents 75% of the \$4000 taken in European rentals as of the first of the year. As our March, 1981, report indicates, domestic rentals have not recouped any distributors' initial costs, and have therefore provided El Tet with no income. Since the "recoupable cost" does not apply to the first \$40,000 of foreign rentals, El Tet is eligible for an additional \$24,770 immediately upon the collection of such rentals. We have no idea, however, when or if such rentals are forthcoming. We remain hopeful."

"Glenn and I are pleased to be able to return even so small an amount to those who put their faith in us and our project. We and



The Executive Board of Mr. El Tet
Glenn Morgan and Eric Lewell, initially
invite you to the World Premier (except
Wichigan) of the delirious feature comedy
Increasing Furrowed,
released nationally by
The Cannon Group of New York City
membership in the running
the twenty-second day of April
cinemas everywhere
The Twin Aire Drive-In
Cherie Leigh Beach Party
Drive Up
The inclusion admits you invited

our attorney will continue to do everything possible to ensure that every cent due our investors will reach them properly."

This was the last money Eli-Tot would ever get from Gerson. Distributors refusing to pay filmmakers until their inflated distribution costs have been recouped is a classic scam of the indie world, and one that continues to this day.

Throughout it all, Morgan and Lewis remained friends and business partners. They've co-owned Pro Italia, a motorcycle dealership in Los Angeles, for over 20 years, along with another friend whom they met while making the movie. And while they've both played steadily employed in the entertainment industry in the years since, they didn't pursue the low budget, drive in route. I guess we both lost interest in the game after working so tirelessly on ~~IRONING TISSUES~~ for a few years. It was never our favorite kind of movie, but one we thought we could pull off. So I never saw ~~POKEY~~ or most of the ones that followed," Morgan admits.

And though the experience was heartbreaking at the time, from a distance of thirty years it was worth it to Morgan. "What am I most proud of? It's the fact that we actually made a decent film with some fancy stuff in it that played to real audiences and got laughs. We never did anything we were ashamed of in the whole process. We raised the money, we literally trained most of the crew and we finished it, pulled it off and sold it. But here's the kicker that I didn't appreciate at the time, it was with what you'd have to describe as almost no resources at all. When I moved out here, I realized people making films like this had a B from USC, and whole swarms of hungry film grads. Not to mention a million aspiring actors with backgrounds, training, whatever. And everyone pulled random everywhere. We had acting, but a college dropout, ourselves, and two or three friends who had made super-8 films or wanted to. We tested everyone who showed up--most of whom we didn't know--to see and help. And the ones who liked it and who found something productive to do came back the next day. After a week or so we had a pretty solid crew, but not the crew we thought we'd have. And they all gladly did it all for free and got something out of the experience. A woman who was mine. Kirk's friend, a grad student who helped us with some of the script, was there the night we shot Vir's first nude scene, with a bunch of college students standing around, and told us we treated the whole thing with great professionalism. He made tons of friends and so on, not even the people who put money into the movie and lost it. They were disappointed, but I don't know of anyone who felt like we screwed them over. That's pretty rare. I'm still proud of that and I try to treat everyone I've worked with since with the same respect we treated all those random folks, even though the people I work with here get paid. I'm sure Eli-Tot feels the same way. Having ~~IRONING TISSUES~~ on my resume never got me anything, but what I learned making it, both from a filmmaking and human standpoint, was worth more than I ever hoped for."

GROG'S BUSTED BREAD

RANTS TO BRING YOU DOWN AND LIFT YOU UP!

By Greg Eklund

Recent Grips about NYC and John Ford on Twitter

I was looking up a bunch of old magazines last night and found some Time Out New York's from 2009 covering the smoking ban. Maybe it's because I haven't smoked in years, but it was a big deal when that changed in here, it really spearheaded the stag culture we have now. Wine/balls now is here, I assume real people are at home. Comments in the article were from angry smokers, who had balls and said they would resist it and smoking would come back. Well we know that smoking in here didn't come back, but one point I like to make is that you can see in the writing that print media was more legitimate, rather than everything being based on the perception of a blog or webpage first. If satire at the thought of considering 2009 a glory year! But then you'd have thought that a web taker of media would be good because it would be a free for all of expression, but you can see now that all these blogs and sites are just a more efficient way for every young stivvies to adapt to the mainstream safe and/or avant-garde landscape of reporting on their lives/the business condition. What do I mean? For example, you go to a site like Brooklyn Paper and all the articles are on ~~SIEN~~, an event 2000 miles away. Brooklyn is not supposed to report on get together you should go to in Texas. Free expression technology, implemented to serve the rich, centralized, corporate mind. Anyway, what the internet has done for me is fragments the experience of reality. Aside from everyone having access to a world online in their bedroom and hence not covering and looking for unique only in the form of cases, it also creates the filter and breakdown of the attention span. W and I have long discussed the notion that back in the day really smart people wanted to be directors, but now the smarter people are not going into movies, but into IT or a business, etc. And why not, based on what we mentioned above. Our heroes are John Ford, Kubrick, Hitchcock, Melies, we love their films and willingly look to them as role models of personality, uncompromising and unyielding in their art. But would they be allowed to do so now, with directors not having really any power anymore in the studio system? Probably not. And even if so, the breakdown of the process before even seeing the film, and commentary tracks, further dissuade the effort. I like listening to commentators, but they really take away from the fantasy and it's really nobody's business how a film was made. If you've seen the film for years and then hear the commentary, okay, but it shouldn't be a given. Imagine, these days John Ford would have to tweet from the set. Kubrick might not be working in film, maybe working at Taco Bell. If his dreams were dashed he probably wouldn't, but I digress. Hitchcock would be in a web startup. It's very easy to look at it this way, and probably our heroes were just lucky in circumstance, at the right place and year, like when Orson gave everyone a shot, and it wasn't a big deal to make a B movie, and it wouldn't bankrupt the studio etc. But I think we are right to see outside just the circumstance and see these as uncompromising artists who justly fought the righteous battle against social conditioning and probably would have been successful in whatever field they ended up working in even if they started out in 2009. We are all together in having to endure this last decade, least of laws, and whatever may follow, but if we stay true and pure to ourselves, we will not betray our souls.

ANATOMY OF A SEDUCTION: 2 middle aged woman's friendship is tested

ANATOMY OF A SEDUCTION is a 1979 TV movie directed by Steven Hilliard Stern **THE PARK IS MINE** and written by Allison Crow. Starring Susan Flannery (Dallas: **THE TOWERING INFERNOS** Susan is an architect who works in an office in one of the Century City Towers. She and her good friend, played by Rita Moreno, are divorced with young adult sons. Rita is interested in the singles scene and Susan is rigid, but they are both lonely. Up until this point we see Susan is attractive for her age and gets offers. We see her coldly reject several advances on her by older men, in elevators, bars, and from her ex-husband. After a tennis match, Rita asks Susan to let her Ivy League son intern with her architecture firm and this is how the affair starts. Susan's son knows and disapproves of the affair, but is loyal to his mother. It is kept a secret and continues with several passionate romps in public and in the bedroom, but soon the son gets too attached and works a relationship, ready to give up his college and career. Susan doesn't go along with this, realizing he is too young, and realizes how the age difference will be detrimental to his desires and opportunities as he ages. He never met, but eventually Rita finds out and is furious at her friend for betraying her. Eventually the friendship is reinvigorated and the boy goes back to Princeton. The film is done in the late '70s TV-movie style like "Dallas" with a lot of slow-burn sexual notes and some less and some from the Century City towers and apartment buildings. This is also a good film because it tackles the subject of over-40's women looking for love. Whereas this subject matter is still covered three days in "Sex and the City" type shows and crudely described as Cougar fans, Susan is more elegant, disciplined and never whines about her situation. You can tell these two probably married and had kids in their early 30s and it didn't work out and now they are looking for that next step. My one major gripe is that the son looks too old to be playing a 30 year old, though maybe that decision was on purpose due to it being on TV. Late '70s LA is always fun to watch.

This film was available on Thruout EMI VHS and I relished it as an extra rare film for review. Soon enough, I noticed it was listed on Rialto and now more people are able to discover it. At first I was sad that it was no longer rare, but I picked it up and now see this as a good thing. As of this writing there are quite a bunch of rare 80s films up there and they have improved quality over the videotape. Eventually there will be a system where every rare film is available online for free, which will eliminate the concept of a "rare" film. There will just be films that are watched or not watched.



HEARTBREAKERS: Two men's friendship amidst multiple female relationships

HEARTBREAKERS is a 1984 film about the friendship between 2 men, Eli, played by Peter Onyiah and Eli, played by Rick Shuford. Eli is an artist who paints sexy pop art and Eli is a playboy who inherited a business from his terminally ill father. The film deals with both characters' problems with female relationships and how the 2 remain friends throughout. One scene that's memorable is how they go to Fuddrurger at night. It brings back the freshness of fast food chains back then. Though that chain is good and open late, there is an excitement they both have about going to have fast food that you wouldn't see supposed professionals taking part in these days.

The friend Eli is not an artist at all. He inherited a business from his rich father who is terminally ill. The plot mostly concerns Eli's break up with Kathryn Barrold over a rival artist Max Bell from "Barney Miller" and the "Blue Man Group" episode of "Amazing Stories" and Eli's courtship of and relationship with the gallery assistant. He and Eli fight over women, but in the end, they make up because they value each others' relationship and bond. It is mature subject matter deftly handled, most certainly from the fact that all the women in the film are developed, intelligent characters. Even those who would be stereotypes in another movie, like the first woman Eli takes home, turn out to be verbose and insightful when her opinion is asked.

Barrold is great as the girlfriend who breaks up with Eli and takes a shit inside his heart. They don't get back together.

The movie doesn't have a very happy ending. There are sex romps and good LA setting locations. **HEARTBREAKERS** is a great time capsule of the LA art world of the early 80's before the late 80s stock market crash forced the closure of a lot of galleries in the area. Eli's paintings are uncritical pin up girl Melbie Page style, but sexually provocative and hence have appeal. Also he is very passionate about his work and doesn't compromise. He even quits a solid painting job he has.

In addition, to sharing the same time period and city, **HEARTBREAKERS** and **ANATOMY OF A SEDUCTION** have in common the fact that the directors of both films used Tagerine Brown for scenes in the years 1984-1985. **HEARTBREAKERS** was directed by Bobby Roth, who used Tagerine Brown to provide a great scene. Tagerine Brown would later score other Roth films like the Randy Quaid golf saga, **HEAD SHOTS** and **THE MAN INSIDE**.

These two films show LA as a town where mature relationships can take place, and not as a hellhole. Just as how there are films about violent NYC and Woody Allen's NYC, these films will resonate with anyone who is a longtime resident of the city and loves it for its idiosyncrasies and catalysts for meaningful intimate relationships between consenting adults.

By RJ Wasegany

Dean Kadzard is best known for his 2006 film *REFLECTIONS OF EVIL*, an inscruible vision of a world gone mad that also happens to be one of the most accurate portraits of modern life committed to film. Kadzard was a one-man band on *REFLECTIONS*, writing, starring, casting, directing, doing cinematography for and editing both picture and sound. Passed by an indomitable but flawed by years of poverty and claustrophobia, *REFLECTIONS* was transferred from the 35mm origin onto twenty some odd thousand DVD copies, which were left in various places around Los Angeles in an attempt to get noticed. While mainstream industry recognition never came, word of mouth turned *REFLECTIONS* into an underground favorite and Kadzard into a cult celebrity.

Ultimately, *REFLECTIONS*'s success turned out to be a mixed blessing. It's as vivid and unique—and weird—that Kadzard's still trying to live down his performance as 'Bob' and frustrated by the fact that although it's what he's best known for, it's not necessarily representative of him. 'On some or many ways it is a curse but I'm certainly glad I made it. It's mainly a curse from the standpoint of people thinking I'm only capable of making that kind of scattered, non-linear film. That style of humor,' he told the website *Illegals*. Contrasting in early 2008 viewed in the context of his entire filmography, *REFLECTIONS* seems most in sync with his later films in its critique of the empowerment of government and big business on the unsuspecting public and its psychosocial-inducing effects on society, and its heartache, *KINCH*—free nostalgia for the 70's and early 80's.

Along with *MULHOLLAND DRIVE*, *REFLECTIONS* is probably the best movie about modern L.A. And like the Lynch film, *REFLECTIONS* may be horrific in parts, but more in the way of a nightmare than a genre film.



Kadzard has said several times that he doesn't consider himself a horror director, but he doesn't want to be known as a director of escapism, either. Although most of his subsequent films are brilliant examples of this form, Kadzard's follow up to *REFLECTIONS* is the forty five minute *DEAN KADZARD MOUNTAINMAN GOES*, which re-edited promotional footage of George Lucas prepping *INDIE 1*, turning the director into a megalomaniac, out of touch idiot. It distances with genuine footage of publicist fantasies running into the film's premiere interest with the nude male wrestling scene in *Buscetta* *WOMEN IN LOVE*—a funny job at the strange, male only clubhouse of modern film geeks. And he'll expose forget the real purpose of the *MOUNTAINMAN*, a Dean Geese ordinary card reading. 'George Lucas 1944-1999,' closes it, while the *NOT FEELING* movie version of 'The Loving Room' plays over a montage of clips pulled from a variety of low-budget 1960's sci-fi movies. Those lyrics ('we gave her everything money could buy') coupled with Kadzard's head picked succession of images since he's not just jumping on the Lucas-bashing bandwagon, but bemoaning the painful-to-watch struggle of a fellow artist whose tastes were not unlike Kadzard's own, once upon a time.

LOST IN THE THINKING debuted in 2006, and its premiere coincided with Kadzard's first UK solo gallery exhibition. The grounds was an invitation by a trio of artists in 2004 to participate in a project sponsored by BFI/WMMA in New York in which they would (according to one of the artists' blog) 'set up a studio producing paintings in response to' Kadzard's films, and Kadzard would 'film their contemplative process of discovery and produce a work called *The Thinking*.' The three was 'Scientific Detachment,' or the way people react to other cultures, but disagreements among the group resulted in KIL pulling the plug on the exhibit before it opened. Kadzard's oeuvre controls the dissolving project as the artists founder in search of their art, and the viewer starts to realize that the cultural flickers they're planning to recycle for postmodern purposes still elicits a lot of genuine love and passion from the filmmaker, putting his philosophical at odds with them. When Kadzard suggests they make *YELLOWBONES 2* (a), something he claims he's always wanted to do, their disbelieving reaction makes it clear that it's the artists themselves who have been appropriated for the project.

SHACKLED ONE GOON is Kadzard's most schizophrenic movie, thoughtful, slapdash, acerbic and romantic. It's the clearest expression yet of his obsessions regarding the increasingly totalitarian media state we live in, utilizing clips from 'To Catch a Predator' and other tabloid sources to create a stifling atmosphere of paranoia—something Kadzard's better at doing than anyone else working. But he's got a different aesthetic free wheeling artist drag *Indie*, and has claimed that he uses clips from other films out of financial necessity. Most of *SHACKLED ONE GOON* is shot on video around Los Angeles, without permits, giving it a tense, hidden camera feel, but also preventing it from being as dynamic as it wants to be.

The story is a quasi sequel to both 1994 and *LOGAN'S RUN*, featuring descendants of characters in those films (as well as KILL and *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA*) who come to realize they're in a movie being directed by 3 movie director John 'Bud' Carline (who does not appear but is portrayed by an actor). While the propaganda film from the Kurt version of 1994 plays repeatedly on Fox News, sleep life shoppers wander through Universal Citywalk, a place that needs very little set dressing in real life to state as intellectually repressed society. The film's overarching point is that we are in the kind of world 1994 scared us about—televized pain and police action posing for entertainment, government/media propaganda disguised as news, commerce as the upshot of the masses, and freedom of thought/artistic expression censored by copyright law administered by monopolistic corporations. It's all very charged and highly political, but not pertinent: the world really ended in 1994, and we're living through a bad cultural hangover.

Kadzard's next film, *TALKS OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND*, is also his most visually pleasing. Loosely adapted from Hayao Miyazaki's animated *KIKUKU OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND*, he shows in tone to Kadzard's unfinished late 90's fantasy film *SPIN* and the trailer he shot for the never filmed *WINTY-BIRD ADVENTURES* than it is to the offbeat cinematic portraits of his more well-known films. *TALKS* was shot in Malibu Creek State Park and shows his more formal and delicate side. Described as a 'love letter' to the source, it will likely make as sense to viewers unfamiliar with the original, especially since it's in Japanese and only partly subtitled. But after years of winning back filmmakers use Bronson Canyon in unoriginal ways, it's nice to see a Southern California filmmaker use a new location in a beautiful way. Far from the no-budget 'failures' he's called it is one of his more

self-critical moments, TALLE is a pleasant, modest achievement, not as successful as some of his other work but surprisingly accomplished considering the circumstance of its creation.

It's a bad time to be an artist, never mind an auteur. Despite his willingness to work as an editor for hire and his obvious talent, Richard struggles to get jobs. He refers to the low-paying editing gigs he can scrounge up as "raccoon jobs," which range from "tap races" down to particularly miserable "bottom races" ones. One example of the latter is a recent DVD supplement he edited for which he was paid in honor of breakfast cereal! At the same time, however, there's been a lot written about him recently, and he's been showcased both by a legion of fans on the Internet and by the avant garde film community. This attention from the art world has led to several shows in, among other places, London and New York, putting him in the unusual position of being a critically respected underground filmmaker who longs for mainstream success. And while it would be nice to suggest that this contradiction fuels his art, in reality it probably just stifles it. We've moved out of the auteurist era and are now in one where the artist's ability to get his work seen depends more on his talent at networking than his talent as his craft. Richard may just not be a good fit for our time, but his body of work shows he's one of the few people around who can accurately critique it. And maybe that's the definition of a successful artist.

8600 SIXTH INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL PACKARD, FILMMAKER, LOS ANGELES, CA, JANUARY 26, 2010 1:30 AM

GP These days it's hip to work the past, but you pay reverence to it in your films. How would you describe the 1960's, 70's and 80's?

DP These were the last days where there were some really interesting ideas to explore in cinema. It was the last era for a lot of things. The 60's were the beginning of the end. Where starting all the previous loose creative ends and values and styles was the attitude of the 60's and 70's, the 80's were all about going back to the 50's. The 80's was a really fun decade, especially the early to mid-eighties. Then in the late 80's it crystallized, and is the period that we're still in now. The Brazilian video reiterations, corporate control. The attitude of the movies coming out then is like now. The Lifetime horror films, cheap comedies and market niche films. They were around in the late 80's but are exaggerated a million times now, with cell phones and technology and Internet. Things like that were just coming around at that time.

GP I recall it was around 1989 when things started to stagnate and it seems like everything has been on pause and unchanged since then.

DP Yeah, definitely. Some people talk about how there was a spike in the early 80's with this surge of independent film like Tarantino and Rodriguez, and others, like the new independents with the New Wave, but I don't know if that's really such a great thing. I like Tarantino, but what did they really bring? They took what had already been done before and put a new sensibility or twist on what had already been established in the 60's and 70's. Things have remained the same since then, so the 70's and 80's were a really inspiring time, a great period. The last days, the last golden era, like the 30's and 40's.

GP I think the quality of editing in film has been poor in the last decade. Every film seems to have a million cuts in it, creating a sense of underfinished random imagery, disregarding audience and story. Is it because of the easy access to non-linear editing systems like Avid and Final Cut Pro as opposed to the past where it was done on a flatbed and more difficult to cut and get access to facilities?

DP In many ways editing has gotten worse. Most critically, it's the formula behind editing. Not necessarily in features, but in trailers and marketing. Trailer editing is what annoys me the most. It became as blatant. I don't know when this trend started, but every cut in a trailer is made out. Look at every trailer now and they're all like that. It's not the use of computer editing, it's the formula behind trailer editing. Which is so strict now, and has been, every trailer has to be cut the same way. The same techniques, fades, dissolves, fade in fade out, you just get these little bits of information. It's this dumb sort of way of advertising, it's screwing the whole package, it's put together as idiotic. I don't know how or why this began or what the reason is for it, because trailers used to be a lot different, they were creative and each one had a little bit of style to it, but then the marketing niche formula started. They're all the same, they're all advertising to the same idiotic mentality. It's almost impossible to tell what a film is going to be like from trailers now. They all look the same and they could look good or bad depending on what your interpretation of what that is. I guess they figure that makes it look great, so whether the film is good or bad it doesn't matter.

GP It's also annoying how these days they show you the whole movie in the trailer.

DP Yeah, I know a lot of people who complain about that, that they probably show you too much. However if you go back, trailers were a lot longer than they are now a lot of times. They've always been pretty lengthy, even trailers from the 60's and 70's show too much from the film. It depended on what they were, but they were still much better edited and individualistic and of course they had much more interesting narrators. They had a lot of good narrators working. Now they're not using narrators as much, but the people working in that field now are just awful, they're doing horrible imitations of Don LaFontaine, who was great, he had a genuine quality to his voice. He made it sound exciting. And you also had actors doing voiceovers. Like Perry Rodriguez, very distinct and interesting. He was a black actor who had a lot of character roles in the 60's and 70's. He was in a "Star Trek" episode, the one about where they're trying to subvert the enterprise with the computer 80, and he's the minister that comes on. He did narration for a lot of Spielberg trailers. JAMES GLOVE ENGLISHMAN. He made them sound very exciting, he had an intelligent quality. That's all gone now.

GP Most movie buffs go out of their way to establish cred by referencing obscure films and directors, but you reference more mainstream directors like Spielberg and Lucas. Do you like obscure films too?

DP Yes, I'm a fan of obscure stuff. Spielberg in the 70's and early 80's was the big inspiration but so was Coppola, Scorsese, and Kubrick. At that time, I didn't know too much about foreign directors, I was only exposed to mainstream, but back then the mainstream was pretty good. I hadn't discovered Tarkovsky then!

Q4 You've said you have an aversion to sleazy sex and violence, why?

A4 I guess there's a certain camp that loves that type of thing like sleazy grindhouse grindhouse films and contemporary I've never been interested in that. So I guess there's a simple answer, I'm not particularly a big horror buff. There's nothing that interesting about the horror genre. My approach to doing a horror film would probably be something that's already been done, like Polanski's approach to THE EMBLISH or Robert Wise's THE HAUNTING, something that's well grounded in reality and well written with good performances. There's nothing particularly interesting about a supernatural creature or monster, they're fun films, but I can think of very few films that I thought were genuinely spooky or scary. Gore and sleazy camp value simply for the effect of shock value, that's not interesting to me, I'm more interested in making the films like Casablanca or All About Donald, or even Van Trier, stuff like that.

Q5 Did you see ANTIHUMAN?

A5 I wasn't crazy about ANTIHUMAN. But the last few Van Trier films were good. I liked DOGVILLE. I really love the first 5 or 6 of his, ELEMENT OF CRIME, NERVA, is amazing, they're all really technically inspired but still really great, BREAKING THE WATERS, DANCING IN THE DARK, RANCHO IN THE DARK is a film I really wish I could have made. I would have made it a little differently too. I love Björk in it, she was amazing, and I like those themes. He really frustrated by stories about fragile female characters. I think it's the style and the musical numbers in it, the way he set up 80 cameras and shot a scene, I think it was an interesting experiment. I would've done it differently, photographed the dance numbers differently, sort of, or like if I could. Even though he did a really good job of giving it a look. It didn't look like digital, especially for being shot on early digital.

Q6 Which recent film would you have liked to have directed or remade?

A6 The 6th Indiana Jones film. I would've made sure there was a different script. Harrison Ford looked great in it. If Spielberg had given us free reign to go out on real locations. He promised he was going to do that, and he didn't. He said he was going to do it the old-fashioned way, and it was all studio green screens and CGI, and CGI sets, it was ridiculous. And the whole thing turned into a cartoon, a Disney Disney cartoon like all these films do, that's not what makes them interesting at all. They go off a cliff and suddenly this laborer is swinging on vines. I guess there was some of that in TEMPLE OF DOOM, but TEMPLE OF DOOM was still good because they were doing it in the analog age, and they had to do everything for real, what they couldn't do with matte paintings and miniatures and it was just so much better.

Q7 What was special about the 70's TV series? Was it because there were talented directors then like Curtis Harrington and Paul Wendler to name a few?

A7 Directors had more creative control in TV at that time and weren't following a market niche or style or template. They were good series, there were great stories, good writers, it was a different generation, you had a different generation of better writers and directors that came out of an earlier period of time. So you had more intelligent series being made.

Q8 What do you like the most about the late 70's and early 80's?

A8 Well, the late 70's/early 80's was its own time, as opposed to the late 60's/early 70's. The late 70's/early 80's was in a way where the quality of TV movies, movies, series, compared to the late 60's/early 70's, started dropping. The late 70's was the beginning of the blockbuster bubble gas era and TV shows like "Rocky Horror" and "Battersea Station," which I still think are fun. That was its own time, the fantasy sci-fi boom special effects period. The genre of sci-fi and fantasy and horror, they were at their peak, there was a new resurgence of popularity for those films then. And there were a lot of technological breakthroughs going on then with sound and visual effects in the analog age. Special makeup effects too, everything was happening at that time in the late 70's and early 80's, so that was another renaissance period, but it was different from the renaissance of the late 60's/early 70's to mid-70's. The quality that existed from then, where you had those veteran writers, veteran directors, really good stories, character-based films, not dependent in any way on visual effects, they were all suspense or story or character based emotionally driven, and then you had this special effects explosion in the late 70's that was different so some people will point to that period as the downfall. Another good one to get a benchmark of what people thought of that time in this documentary called NOON 666 by the Wanders, shot at some film festival in '08. Everyone was there, like Godard, Fassbinder, Antonioni, they're all in there and they would sit in a room and talk about the future of cinema, and to them that was the end of cinema. The early 80's, the way things were going at that time, with blockbusters and special effects that was it. To think if they knew what it would be like now things were still great as far as I was concerned at that time. Spielberg was interviewed too, he was there, and he was the only one who had a different point of view of that period. He actually thought it was a pretty good time and I agreed with him, so that's kind of a misunderstood time, from a certain point of view. I think it was another renaissance period in a lot of ways. Even though the quality of standards had changed from 5 decades of quality writing, where good stories and good films were not dependent on effects, it was still a pioneering time in its own way for effects, and a lot of things. And it was good, it was an exciting time and I think that continued through the mid-80's to the early 90's was the last period, at that time I was working for Walt Disney, doing a lot of theater work in Westwood. You could make a movie about this like AMERICAN DREAMS, but not in the theater world. It was so exciting what was going on. They were like the last days, you had big single house theaters, opening these huge blockbuster series in 7000 seats, lines around the block, people waiting overnight for movies, that's all gone now, it died by the 90's that was the last period in history where cinema still had that excitement going on.

Q9 What is your favorite lost movie theater in LA?

A9 The Moon National in Westwood, which they tore down a few years ago. It'd been dying for a few years, I'm surprised it lasted as long as it did. I worked there in 1964. Westwood was an exciting place for movies then and it's all dead now, they're going to close it down. There's only 2 theaters left The Village and The Bruin, and their leases are running out this year. There's no way they can stay open, so one is going to close, single house theaters are gone. The Chinese Theater still sticks around because it's a landmark and it's protected because it's the moon for tourists and the Chinese dance because it's accompanied by the Acrobats.

Musique, but it's not what it used to be. The Cinema does actually isn't that great a place to see a film, it warps the image and if you have subtitles on the bottom, they're cut off, it's better to see them in another one. Even so, with the Arclight it's still a pretty good place. The does was really good when they played those films like *SENSEN* and *IT'S A MAD MAD MAD MAD WORLD*. But the Museum

national is my favorite. I started working there right after *TEMPLE OF DOOM*, which I saw there a dozen times.

05 Did they show *SENSEN*?

JP Yeah, the Tinseltown film I remember also that opened, it played at another theater, the Bruin or Flame. I remember when it was out, it didn't do very well, kind of same old story. Nobody saw it. I'm really not that good a film, I like other Michael Christian films better, *DOOMER* is great. *WITNESS*, *GRAND TRAIN ROBBERY*.

05 Did you see *LOOKER* in the theater?

JP No, I never saw *LOOKER* in the theater. That was one of those films that would not be shown 3 times a day. I probably saw it a hundred times in places before that film. One thing about *SENSEN*, is that Jerry Goldsmith is my favorite composer, and I have all of his soundtracks, like *THE 400 BLOWS*, and I don't like his score for *SENSEN*. It may be the only one I don't like. He did some electronic music in the 60s that I don't like. And he was working with electronic music back, since the beginning before anyone else was doing it, but I wasn't really into the *SENSEN* score, it was the sound of that particular synthesizer he was using that I just hated. It was a really annoying sound. I think *LOOKER* had a similar sound, which used the same sound years later. There's another score that I hate, when people love that score, it's a lot of pop keyboard score. I just don't like it.

05 Do you like the score for *GUPT*?

JP Yeah, I like that score. Charles Bernstein right? I hate that. That's interesting. I just did a little thing on the *GUPT* trailer, and I always wondered what the music in the *GUPT* trailer is. It's not in the movie. It's something else. I don't know where they got it from.

05 Is the quality of movies today poor because of the vertical integration of management in film companies in the last 20 years?

JP There's a lot of reasons. It's the whole changing of sensibilities more than anything. It's not just that people don't have the creative freedom they once did, it's that creative freedom is now considered to be. If you look at the 60s and 70s, directors were still fighting to get their vision. It's the same as now, dealing with controlling producers, but it was a different sensibility of what was good and bad, perceptions of reality.

05 *REFLECTIONS OF EVIL* had a budget, but your other films have not. Did you ever try to get funding by sending scripts out to agents or production companies?

JP Yeah, I did that once, but I never was much of a writer, I never had a stack of completed scripts or even one or two solid scripts. I had some treatments, I would send a lot of things around to agents and production companies, but nothing has ever come of any of that. I did start starting from the late 60s to early 80s, sent out a lot of copies of whatever new films I had made, or outlines I had made. I would send those out to literary agents, trying to get something, did that for a while, sent as many as I could, sent a query letter and a copy of a film I had made, it never really got any results. Nothing ever came of that. It was around the year 2000, 10 years ago I got an inheritance and I made *REFLECTIONS* from that.

05 How long was *REFLECTIONS OF EVIL* written before you made it?

JP Not very long, it was a combination of a few different ideas I was developing in the late 90s. Even though I started shooting I had some of a treatment, then a detailed script and so much of it was left open for improvisation. So it was in the late 90s I had those 3 ideas, the guy going around trying to sell watches and the 70s flashback scenes with young Spielberg, they were 2 separate series with 2 separate titles and I decided to combine them and I remember I had a detailed treatment, but I was really just using it as a reference and the actors would show up and wonder what they were supposed to do. But you know, who needs scripts?

05 Do you believe in cheertrails?

JP Cheertrails? Well, cheertrails are there, they've been around for a while, they've been spraying for years now.

05 Are your portrayals of cheertrails any other examples of fringe science satire?

JP I guess it's not really satire, what you would call fringe science, or poking fun. I think they're all interesting, I would be more inclined to believe that than what you might consider the mainstream presentation we get of reality through the mainstream media. The conspiracy aspect of reality. The word conspiracy has been diluted, as soon as that word is changed, as soon as the language changes, it will change the whole interpretation of what the elements of conspiracy are. It's more reality and fact than it is conspiracy theory. The word conspiracy has such a negative connotation. I wish I had another way of describing it. Another word is fringe science or alternative media. It's hard to generalize about that stuff, to just point at different theories and say I believe or I don't believe, it's more that I'm more inclined to believe that than the mainstream presentation of reality how we see it where everyone is so dismissive of alternative realities. All that conspiracy-based stuff has more fact based reality than what we think.

05 Was *REFLECTIONS OF EVIL* intended to be funny, with all of the dubbed voices?

JP Well yeah, that all came about during the mixing of the movie and looping of sound effects. I had to shoot the whole thing WII, so there was a lot of sound work to do. Except the Carter's scenes. That had production audio, which I try to use if I can, when

you're shooting in a controlled environment. There was too much shooting on the fly location work in that to have location sound. We were getting kicked off so many locations anyway, if I had brought a sound person. Plus I had intended from the beginning, even though I prefer not to shoot HBO, I like to have real production value, it's so difficult, but I think on that one I had intended to do most of it. The voice and performance from all these incidental characters I think it would have been so difficult to capture that live, and I thought it would be easier and get more energy out of it by having it all, like with those guys screaming in the background.

25. Where did you find these street situations in the film, were they just there in the street?

26. It's a variety, some of these were just recruited on the spot, gave them some money. Some were from responding to casting ads, and



I arranged for them to come down. It was a combination of real people and actors.

27. Have you made HBO a TV movie that you like?

28. OLD HICKS' DEATH is good. WHEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS, that's the seasonal FRIDAY THE 13th movie, but from 1981. I like that one a lot, it's like FRIDAY THE 13th and BLACK CHRISTMAS, but gruelier than it was one of those veteran TV directors, John Llewellyn Moxey and it had a great cast—Gailly Field, Jessica Walter. Another good one is ALL THE KING STRANGERS, with Stacy Keach. He's turned into a movie house by kids who turn out to be keeping this woman prisoner there who was also turned into this house. It's like they want to adopt a parent, they're all kids but their parents were killed. Now they need parental guidance, so they adopt these people off the highway and turn them into their house by asking for help, by sending this little little boy out to ask for help and they wait for the right

person to stop and adopt them and then force them into being their mother and father. That's one of my favorites, it's great. There were a number of them that were popular but I didn't think were that good, CONFESSIONS FINAL, but there were others like those that were much better, like the psychological haunted house story, usually with some sort of satanic connection or evil artifacts. A lot of great TV movies, a lot of really great directors working in that field. Money, Madeline, there's like 5 dozen of these you could name, Bernard and Vincent McWorthy, Howard Kessel, he did a bunch of "Rockford Files" guys like that. My friend Jeff Marx KUFFPATRICK & LEATHERFACE, PINKISHOARD & also some TV movies and I've been helping him with a pet project in Georgia for a while. He got fed up with the work situation in LA and went to Georgia to help his family and has been gone for almost 2 years. He was supposed to do a KILLER and KILLER film, he almost broke the record for number of sequels. He also made some independent films like STRAIGHT INTO DARKNESS, THE OFFERING. His first film had Vincent Price in it. But he's been doing this documentary on TV directors who were working from the 50's-70's, was in the 60's, and he's got like a dozen people lined up to interview, we've interviewed about 6-7 people I'm dividing the day that I have to actually edit this, because there's so much material and he's just such a massive project. We interviewed William A. Graham, he did HOUSE OF FLEET with David Janssen. He did 2 hellbanger movies and some features. We interviewed Ben Adair, who did one of my favorites, THE FERN OF CHAMBER LAKE. He's not very good, but the atmosphere about it, there's something perfectly inspired as to do THE EARLY 70's HORROR TRAILER. Those elements of really eerie, dreamlike strange quality. Teddy started as a title guy and then mainly worked with "Thriller Film Co." He's a very mellow, by the book, easy to work with kind of guy. We also interviewed the director of SWAY FOR THE WILDCATS, and we interviewed Joseph Bower, the director of JANE & SUPERHERO. Bower did a bunch of "Right Gallery" episodes. He only had about 2 hours with him, and his at Tower Street Studio where he was shooting an episode of "Bones" or one of those new shows. Really cool guy, we talked a lot about "Right Gallery" and SUPERHERO, JANE & SANTA CLAUDE THE MOVIE. He was really excited when I gave him some of my drafts.

29. What are you working on now?

30. I have been developing a sequel to my Elmore—inspired film APPLE with somebody else over the last few months. I don't know if it will get made, but it's got several of the characters from the first film in it. This would be the narrative feature length spin-off version of APPLE. It's called PAPER and it incorporates the Billy Miller story, of Platonic contacts with HBO's and the female extraterrestrial. It incorporates a lot of that stuff and other New Age stuff. Part of a New Age fantasy and it's set in the final months of 2012. The Billy Miller story is one of the most famous controversial UFO cases in history. It was huge, starting in the late 70's when all these photographs started emerging, which was the best photographic evidence that ever existed. There was Super-8 footage as well. A lot of the photos looked phony but then some of them looked great, some of the best model photography ever done, some of the best designed models and forced perspective statue work, for a one armed Jesus man and whenever his partners were. If it was fake, that's pretty good. Without a background in film and GFX, they did a pretty good job.

That alone in itself is a pretty interesting story. How did they fake a lot of that stuff and why? The Polesians look like us like humans, they're supposed to be our cousins. He's been seeing them since the 80's and has written stacks of books of contact notes, it's ridiculous, all these other ET groups that were involved, and its very curious as to how they did it. It was shown on "In Search Of..." which I still enjoy watching. There were some great episodes they did, really intriguing, like of Troll Barrie, some really great aerial footage they got. They interviewed some of the people who were alive at the time. It was very effective with the music and layers. No show could ever duplicate that level, that feeling. The one thing on ghosts and hauntings, those are typically creepy to watch. I should give it an ECHLARA JUSTO type of title like THE ELLY WEIR CHORCHULEP HEMFAGE AND THE BEAN SHIP, or CONGAGE AND HER ADVENTURES ON EARTH. Nobody's ever done a film, not even an independent film, because they don't have the rights. In the 90's the studio approached him to make a film and he wouldn't do it. I'm surprised nobody has just done it and changed the names or done an independent film and incorporated bean ships. There's so much stuff about all these other ET groups and the names are great. There's a bunch of stuff on youtube but there's also this long lecture given by this Swiss group called NIST and this head guy from there came out here for this lecture for Nov06 and talked about all this other stuff all these other ET groups that Billy Bear had contacted that I'd never heard of. I'd read the books that came out in the late 80's and there's so much to work with there as far as characters and they had such great names. Leoriana and Andromediana, other ET groups with other names, it's really interesting, it would be an extensive movie based on all this information. So yeah, Richard's working on his next film CONGAGE AND HER ADVENTURES ON EARTH.

SECRET SHOWDOWNS OF CINEMA. BENO VA. RUSSELL

By Doug Rikore

In 1996's **WOLFEEN**, Todd knows how to eat. He grew up rough and appreciates a good meal and knows how to lick one's plate clean and not waste it. Unlike the hawks and disturbed at how much he eats, you know the chef was flattered. Watch how he stands up when he is challenged.



Now for counterpoint observe Domizkye Barry in Thierry Béro's 1994 film **VASE DE BOCK**, also known as **THE BIG FUCKING MOVIE**. The showdown at the end is a large decoussed and it seems to be the focus that he was packing so meticulously earlier. It's a big showdown with a loud song and a big wooden spoon with a long handle. Both films show aggressive hearty talent.



By Greg Kikore

'lets see what we got here...75, 85, 95, thats it exactly. Check your tip next time'

Someone is always victimized when encountering a cheapskate, and there are many kinds of cheapskates. One is the wingy type who sneaks in the champagne in at the end, with no previous indication. Another type is one that acts angry while being cheap, as if they have to justify it to themselves. This goes much further than the no-tipping scene in *CHERNOBYL 2005*. Shown here is Danish native Fred Astaire's intro scene in *THE YOUNG AND THE RIVER*, done in the twilight of his career in 1954. His character, Marlon Claiborne, is getting out of a cab and offering a 50 dollar bill, which he knows the cabbie cannot change. He then proceeds to count out dimes and dimes until he gets the exact amount, much to the dismay of the angry cabbie, who is astonished that someone would go through so much trouble for such a sum. I like to think of Claiborne as being the same Astaire character from *YELLOW TEN YEARS* later, but that is just this author's fantasy. The character awes a end and when his girlfriend is killed and he holds a cat in fact, *THE YOUNG AND THE RIVER* really is a 100 minute movie about the pitfalls of cheapness as it was cheapness that caused Richard Claiborne's character to cut corners on the wrong place designed by Paul Newman, which was the cause of the great explosion.



The next type, as we mentioned, is the angry one. Obscure in the picture the belligerence of Cheong this scene from 1957's *THINGS ARE YOUNG ALL OVER*. Cheong asks him to pay for the gas they just filled their tank with and he responds with: 'I don't got no money! Working! But a penny! Again, while this time the cheapskate is the aggressor, the effect of shock on the victim is the same. This time, however, the glasses is vice to the scene and takes the expensive prep ratio from the car as collateral until they can pay.



By Greg Kiskawe and JJ Whelan

Upper-class uber-back director M. Night Shyamalan recently got criticized for the supposedly "racist" casting of his children's film *AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER*. The live-action movie, based on a Malaysian cartoon, replaces the Asian-looking and named main characters of the show with white kids. Observed by the prospect of not making money due to boycott protests carried out by annoying liberals who worry about the racial makeup of kids' movies, the director pleaded his politically correct defense to the media.

"[I]t is the most culturally diverse tent-pole movie ever made. And I'm proud of it. It's part of what drew me to the material, to see the faces of our whole world in this new world. And only time will assuage everyone and give them peace. Maybe [the protesters] didn't see the faces they wanted to see but, overall, it is more than they could have expected. We're in the tent and it looks like the U.N. is there."

It's hard to decide what is hate more here, the fact that the protests were led by a white woman on behalf of her adopted eight-year-old Vietnamese son, or the androidic way Kiskawe responded. The JGO cannot imagine in its most feverish nightmares a person more likely to put an off from seeing a movie than a culturally diverse tent-pole movie. This Gwelling Weepspeak of meaningless marketing phrases really just tries to cover up the fact that this movie, like most movies made in the USA today, needs to be exported globally to remove its roots and mask therefore lack any specific cultural references or particularities that could confuse or piss off people in foreign countries. Being of the opinion that the best American movies are made by Americans and for Americans, we have no desire to enter the tent with Mr. Shyamalan, but we do have a suggestion as to how he can direct its pole.

Fortunately, even the studio heads can't be far from realizing that Shyamalan's idea of a good movie is most peoples' idea of a bad one. In a JGO exclusive, Greg Kiskawe's mate inside Paramount managed to dig up the following memo from Adam Goodman, President of Paramount Film Group, written just before work on *ADRENALIN* began. At the time, they were apparently hopeful a change in genre would help break his slump:

Dear M. Night Shyamalan,

In light of your recent failed efforts to curry favor with the horror market, we have decided that your talents would be better used in directing children's films. Though all of us here recall the great success of your debut, every film you have released since it has been non-successful at the box office, and we have been left to clean up the messes you made of our balance sheets. We feel your future films should be of a non-violent nature, of the sort that a young child can stomach with his popcorn. The board and shareholders are unimpressed with your efforts to please to the youth audience by four-walling cinemas in shopping malls/townships in low-income, urban areas. Attendance in these venues was poor and the projected goals of meeting box office receipts went kabloo. For your next film we have a few rising stars of which we recommend you take your pickers. Comedian Rogan Seth, Matthew Malherbe and singer Glenn Danzack are already attached, and this is non-negotiable. We have also set up a huge project for you—a bread stick commercial. Though you may claim this is a dal order and not your style, we disagree and hope you eventually feel the same way. When you actually see the bread stick, you will see that there is a twist at the end. If you succeed at this, you'll be kind to write a treatment for our upcoming video game update blockbuster: *Dines of Nouns*, which will be available for both Xbox and Achari. You will also be able to curry favor with the board if you bring aboard any chefs who can draw in the urban demo on these delectable treats.

Sincerely yours,

Adam Goodman
President, Paramount Film Group

P.S. Do not attempt to accuse the board of bigotry, as racism is a non-issue in this matter.

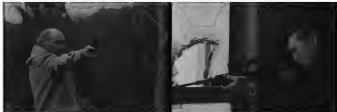
The JGO applauds Mr. Goodman on his good taste and wishes him much success in his future creative endeavors such as *SHREK FOREVER AFTER*, *PARAMORAL ACTIVITY 3*, *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE IV*, *JACKASS 3-D*, the *FOOTLOOSE* remake, and the next *STAR TREK* movie.



THE HAND WAY

By Greg Kikore

THE HAND WAY is a 1999 ITV TV movie, special for being the only pairing of film icons Patrick McGoohan and Lee Van Cleef. A few other notables worked on this film: the DP was Henri Jonck, who shot most of Jean Pierre Melville's films and in addition THE 400 BLOWS and Louis Malle's debut ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS. Director Michael Dwyer was a producer on several John Boorman films, who was the executive producer on this film.



McGoohan plays John Connor, a hitman who wants to retire. The film opens with him sniping somebody from an old warehouse and then collecting his check from a contact at a crowded bar in London's Rye Lane Station. He tells the contact that he is now retired, and takes a train to a yacht back to his home in Ireland, hoping to see his wife. The village he lives in was shot in Newborough/Kennedy in County Wicklow near Dublin. Pretty soon he is confronted by his boss McNeal, played by Van Cleef, in Doolan's, the local pub. They have a great scene together over beers, with reminiscence of all the hits they conducted over the years. It ends with Connor leaving angrily when McNeal wants to hire him again. Connor agrees to do another hit job, this time on an African priest. He gets McNeal to provide him with a custom made night and turns it out on a range, proving that he is the best sniper in the world. During the job, he kills and the priest loves. The rest of the film has McNeal trying to capture Connor. He has his goons follow Connor's wife, and eventually has his men launch a failed assault on Connor at his country home, where he picks them off easily with his rifle. At this point McNeal's financiers are displeased with his failure to arrange the hit and are trying to kill him. This builds up to a final confrontation in an old mansion at night that McNeal has booby trapped. He has the lights on in all rooms and turns out certain lights by swapping out various fuses at his will to trap Connor into being shot. It's a fun hide and go seek scene and they use old tricks they knew from their war days, with McNeal explaining these and making. They end up killing each other in the battle. The film ends with revelation from Connor's wife about how he could never separate himself from his work. He heard her secretions throughout the film, staying her in an eerily well-lit old chamber, and at the end realize that the whole movie was in a way her attempt to her late husband. THE HAND WAY is a great film as it is character-driven and features one of the best performances ever from McGoohan. He feels his pain at losing his wife to the job and his burning desire to get back to his family. He plays the role with little dialogue, deep pain showing in his facial expressions. One is reminded of 'The Prisoner' throughout, as most of the events concern the main characters expressing displeasure with McGoohan's abrupt retirement. Van Cleef is great too, and his acting goes beyond his typical ability when he practices on the gun range in a rage, getting ready for his final confrontation with McGoohan.



In addition to County Wicklow, the film also has scenes in the famous old James Joyce's pub in Dublin. The soundtrack is composed of 2 instrumentalists from Brian Auger's 1978 'Wants for Fingers' album. The song 'Unraveling Your Fingers' is used for most of it, and the tender scenes with wife remembered are from the lovely track 'Events in Stone Fog'. The film's credits curiously lists the track 'A Reverend Song' instead. Connor's children are never met, but there is a family photograph of his 2 daughters with their mother, who are barely shown in the film but given prominence on the back of the video box. The photo also appears on 'This House's' cover. Wonder who those kid actors were and what became of them.

By Greg Eklund

Much of the discourse in this line is about how shitty movies are today. 30 years ago the trend started where every movie that came out was either a comic book adaptation or a remake. We all thought that was a fail, but we can see that it's now the standard for all films coming out as of 2012. 3D effects films have now been added to the mix. Now all the movies are TERRIBLE 3 where Arnold replaces his chest battery, which is his life force. Imagine if you will, the chest battery that drives studio heads and marketing people who now give the go-ahead to the trends mentioned above. It could be said that their heart/battery is a power cell of hate and/or burning hate for films, for the discourse of what makes films important and memorable, and for the history of films. This hate burns so deeply that their method of putting out films is one that expresses their hatred for the viewer of the films too. A lot of EWs of old films do not have the original year put on the box. As if they do not want you know that it is old, because to them old is a weakness where they did not exist and/or did not matter. The concept of these remakes is another one of lies—one to convince you into thinking that it has a resemblance to the original. So you get a result where the young generation doesn't know the old film, while the older generation who does know the remake will be gone. So a new hack job is packaged inside the shell to justify the great lie. As hateful as these remakes are, they are driven by business and as it is said repeatedly, "if people stop going to see these films, they will stop making them." But as we know people do go see them, people will go see anything, and ticket prices are high, so they will still make \$\$. Anyway, all of this is well known.

On the BTO subway when the train arrives during a rush hour and you see all the cars jam packed, sometimes one of them will be near empty. Beware, there is always a reason. Sometimes it's because it is not air conditioned, but the other is that there is a stink. The other day I went into one such car and the stink was so strong of feces that everyone entering would immediately make a 90 degree right turn and use the exit between the cars to enter the next car. It stank so bad that the next car was crowded with 30 people on that side where they just got in to the good smelling car. I was there too so I stayed on to watch the reactions of people entering the stinky car. I laughed.

As I see most people rush to enter my jam packed car but more to see the reactions of those who tried to be so and leave the stinky beautiful young girls sat there for 4 or 5 stops, walking in the terror, some with handkerchiefs around their nose. A great social experiment.

VARIOUS FORMATIONS FOR FECE ASSAULT ON SOLD-OUT FILM PREMIERE OF A SHITTY FILM

"X" marks the spot for strategically placed participants

"BIG BREWSKI"



All in, deep means round robin assault
Heavy concentration of strength near the
room in minimal time.

"BACK ATTACK"



Triple threat in back to flank round robin
four team leaders' first row assault.

"BORDER BETRAYAL"



Positions are along the perimeter. Stand will create
a border around all seats. Securing the
perimeter. Teams require efficient teamwork.

"STACK 'EM DEEP, STACK 'EM HIGH"



Method of team movement to spread the stink.
Open to improvise directional patterns.
Timed release to increase effectiveness
while reducing team visibility.

Many people have problems with their noses. Whether it's the terrible food we eat, or backup, which comes out in stink. But with Oikos Clean, an organic bioactive airway pill, it gets it out. The first time you take the Clean, black viscous mucus will surface in conjunction with the normal sneeze. It's the buildup of infection from decades of beer, cigarettes, and big meals. It is imperative to get it out, or it will wait for you decades later and get you sick. But even if it is not your first time using the Clean, a Clean still is cleaner than a nasal one. My place involves going to the sold out super crowded and packed premiere, where everyone is stink and packed together and can't see, and then shifting one's pants to the seat. Following through as Renee calls it in the film comic book 'Takes'. People will have to put up with the stink in the wild, animals throw feces at things they feel to be gross or false. Therefore, maybe a movie shouldn't be targeted, but blasted Hollywood hypocrites like THE BACKUP PLAN, "TRILLITY 2," BORN OF FEAR, and SHITTY VIBES!!!

If targeting a film festival, one might go through the festival schedule with a highlighter and highlight those related to be the ones for the Clean. These plans are for a feces assault on a theater or the sight of a premiere.



The Japanese laserdisc word made flesh.

Maybe because of this contradiction, directors have generally stayed out of any discussion of their art's influence on society. Modern literature and the more high-minded arts are full of sanctifying self-assessment over the relationship between the work, the author and the consumer, but hardly anyone outside of grad schools pays attention to that stuff anymore. At a symposium almost thirty years from its initial release, *VIDEOSOME* today seems much less about the potential effects of video technology or pornography on society than about what I described above—individuals' complex psychological interactions with (and their increasing dependence on) the 'electronic cloud.' That is their primary means of consuming information.

Cronenberg thankfully refrains from making a Statement, wisely choosing instead to use his funny ideas on the subject, and human nature in general, as a springboard for his horror movie plot. But this also leaves the movie feeling uneasy and somewhat confused, like someone who's trying to say something interesting but can't find the right words. The movie's obsessive look at the film's making is most important when it picks Cronenberg's brain, getting him to state out loud ideas and themes that the movie only hints at, thereby helping us, the viewer, understand it better and appreciate it more. In the movie, *VideoRoom* is a sexually violent television show with a signal hidden in it that gives brain tumors to the devoted viewers. James Woods plays Max Benn, the owner of an end of the dial Canadian TV station, who became addicted to the show after a co-worker introduces him to it. The tumor inside him alters his perception of reality, giving him gassy hallucinations involving the disfigurement and transformation of his body, but goes importantly, it also urges his desires. Although he's been turned on by *VideoRoom* from the beginning, as his grip on reality loosens he starts fantasizing about acting out the show's violence with his *VideoRoom* co-addict Nikki Bond (Debbie Harry). Nikki is so aroused by it that she leaves halfway through the movie to seduce for it and is never seen outside of an hallucination again. With his mind weakened by the tumor, Max is programmed by the show's right-wing crowd, Barry Corvan, to kill the troublemaking daughter of the first victim, a Marshall McLuhan-like philosopher named Brian O'Hairion. But Max is now so way to manipulate that he's counterprogrammed by his intended victim to instead turn on Corvan, after he assassinates them, he flies to an abandoned ship, where an hallucination of Nikki appears on a broken television set and convinces him to kill himself.

In an early chapter of the book, Lincee cites several examples of films that use television as a weapon, but *VIDEOSOME*'s philosophical predecessors are actually more interesting, although the grounds for *VIDEOSOME* was an unfilled 1976 treatment called 'Network of Blood,' the concept of interactive art wasn't new then, nor was the idea of a film arena, or 'drome.' As far back as 1963, experimental filmmaker Stan Vanderbeek began work on the 'Movie Drome,' a multimedia 'page/space/theater' where an alien audience would lie on their backs and experience floating, multi-dimensional images. The following year saw the publication of 'Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,' by Cronenberg's fellow Torontoite McLuhan, which popularized the study of media as a tool that can be used to influence people. McLuhan's ideas got wider exposure in Kubrick's film version of Anthony Burgess's *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, released the year before Cronenberg wrote 'Network of Blood.' In *ORANGE*, constant exposure to filmed acts of real violence also leaves its protagonist susceptible to manipulation and reprogramming.

Hollywood has always loved lecturing its audience. Barely a month goes by without the release of a subtly underselling movie designed to remind the ticket-buying public about the awfulness of war, the inhumanity of big business, or the value of 'tolerance,' that ever-shifting societal virtue that audiences over the years have been taught to extend to blacks, gays, lesbians, non-Christians, comics, foul-mouthed women, liberalized women and allegedly hardcore pornography. These lectures—platform usually end with their victims either dead or miserable, and there's an expectation on the part of the filmmakers that the audience will be motivated by outrage into supporting the film's social message. As Owen Gleiberman is reported to have said, 'There's something in Hollywood more important than money. That vision is being projected.'

It's funny, then, that if challenged, most filmmakers will immediately deny their movies have any effect whatsoever on audiences. Then notorious parents groups or watch-making journalists state that a movie inspired a train of some sort—like the copulate who and *ERIKAL ROSE KILLED* as a template, or the young man who (supposedly) killed Pasolini after seeing *VIOLENT WOMEN*—a filmmaker's first response is usually that 'it's just a movie' and that everyone has the free will to accept or reject whatever the movie's message is. And this is probably accurate—except for the fact that anytime you read an interview with a filmmaker about his childhood, there's always one movie that forever changed his life by inspiring him to dedicate it to the media, making his very existence living proof of cinema's influence.

But VERHOEFFEN goes a step further than A CLOCKWORK ORANGE. The protagonist of ORANGE is forced to watch disturbing images to purge his violent impulses, but Max watches them for stimulation. As a result, they increase, rather than extinguish, his appetite for them. One of Crossberg's cleverest ideas is an hallucination Max has that he's been programmed by a videotape forced into a slit in his stomach. This visual pun on "talking is a crime" serves a potent metaphor for the work of paranoia regarding "video nasties" and heavy metal music that swept the US and England in the 1980s, largely as a reaction to the loosening of censorship boundaries in the 1970s that allowed artists like Crossberg to bring their creativity to life fully realized.

Crossberg obviously doesn't blame the things Max watches for what he does. Really—stuff's really happening around Max, rather than what his tutor shows him—is equally dependent on media, since the key to unraveling the Videodrome conspiracy can only be found in the videotaped lectures of the dead O'Hairson. Similarly, Max would never have met Mike if they weren't both on a local talk show together. Crossberg's ultimate message boils down to the very Michael—scape one that a message is inherently objective and can be used for good or bad—That the medium is the message. It uses this idea to play on the fears associated with it, especially the destructive loss of self-control that comes from giving in to the titillating needs satisfied by popular entertainment.

In interviews throughout the book, Crossberg comes across as thoughtful and well-read, dropping the names of artists and poets to support his points, and it's clear he knows media theory, admitting that Videodrome "was very important to me, as a developing intellectual." For someone as interested in videos as Crossberg was, it seems natural that he would have taken Videodrome's definition of media as a psychological tool and reinterpreted it into a physiological one. "I've always been interested in dark things and other people's fascinations with dark things," he says, claiming VERHOEFFEN's original motivating impulse was to investigate how people "explore their fascinations." At one point Crossberg rhetorically asks if the movie is about "Hollywood corruption by 'democratic capitalism' or his own 'private obsession.'" Clearly it's about the intersection of both—the peril people face by having constant access to the means to give in to their dark impulses and the inhumanity of the providers who give the people what they want but shouldn't have. Crossberg goes on to point out that the film's not an attack on TV or film specifically, but about the influence of electronic media in general, which is one of the reasons why it's dated so well.

Another thing the book makes clear is how haplessly VERHOEFFEN was created. The nature of the conspiracy changed over the course of filming, and Mike's and Bianca's parts flip-flopped in importance as Crossberg worked out the story. As evidenced by the stills on the back of Mike's old video box had included in the book, a lot of scenes that were shot never made it into the final cut. Though the book discusses some of them, it would have been nice if Luna had described them in greater detail or even provided a "Video Watching—like analysis."

The book also details how hard Crossberg struggled with the film's anticlimactic and unsatisfying ending. Unfortunately, he never quite got it right. The abandoned ship with its hellish barrel of fire is an appropriately Goethean place for an assassin to hide, but Max's hallucination—induced outside isn't clearly enough identified as a product of his tutor, and what the "new flick" really seems to be the damaged Max isn't satisfactorily explained.

At one point in the editing process Crossberg completely baffled a test screening audience by cutting out the film's entire first reel, making his realize he had gotten too close to the material. Even with those scenes restored, the finished version feels incomplete, and would probably benefit from some filming out too pun intended, though not necessarily with the fifteen minutes of extra footage in the television version, which Crossberg discards. Whether VERHOEFFEN's opaque storyline and brief running time—give tied with SHYDER as the shortest of his features—adds to its enduring mystique is another question. This feeling of underdeveloped leads Luna to correctly characterize the film as a "handling neuronal failure." In describing the filming as "one or two professional degrees removed from representation," and the creative zeal and crew interviews, which make up the middle half of the book, support this.

One myth the book helpfully dispels is that Crossberg's film was a small production destined from the beginning for cultiness. In reality, Crossberg was seeking out SCHNEIDER, the biggest hit of his career, and VERHOEFFEN had a budget of \$1.5 million dollars and an exclusive distribution deal with Universal. Star James Woods was fresh from his Oscar nomination for THE CRUEL FIELDS, and Co-star Debbie Harry was an internationally known pop singer who appeared on David Letterman's show to promote it. The film received middling reviews and fared poorly in its theatrical run, but the videocassette had "one of the largest pre-orders" in RCA Universal's history. Unlike other cult films, VERHOEFFEN was in the voracious public consciousness from the beginning, and whatever myths it had to its popularity were more the result of its subject matter than any externalities.

Born for movie buffs with no particular love for the film, the book is important as a record of an artist at his creative peak. According to the cinematographer Mark Irwin, Crossberg "keeps rewatching the same film, probably the size total of David's work will be more powerful and impressive than any single film on its own, and within the context of the director's total output, it's the best realization of themes he'd been exploring his entire career. Retrospectively, THE PLAY may be his most successful film overall, but at the price of having to adhere his aesthetic to a conventionally structured story not his own creation. Crossberg had 12 years to allow VERHOEFFEN to percolate before tackling it, and its opaqueness—and resonance—is partly the result of him pushing his stock of ideas to the intellectual limit. It's also possible that the chaotic nature of the filming—due in part to Crossberg's indecisiveness about the plot—forced him to tap into a less filtered vein of creativity, which freed him from his inhibitions.

Transformation is a key theme in VERHOEFFEN, and the film seems to have had a transformative impact on the creator as well. It's apparent now that Crossberg really belongs to that small class of intellectual directors who started out making influential genre films before outgrowing them for more serious art-house or mainstream fare, all he needs now is an Oscar-winning Holocaust movie to put him alongside Polanski and Spielberg. The downside of this career path is that while his early films really pushed the boundaries of the genre beyond their established borders, his more serious films from the 1990s—current have fallen short of their possibilities. In one of the book's interviews he mopes at the label "the king of visceral horror" as something "created by critics," and it's ironic for VERHOEFFEN, but it's also the clearest tag yet devised for his disparate career, especially when quotes like, "I think violence has sexuality at its base, that all violence stems from sexual violence," are considered.

The social critique in *SHIVERS* was pretty clear, and his follow-up films all took aim at other than-sensory aspects of society: indiscriminate sex in the wake of the birth control pill, the West's shift from Christian values to bogus, post-religious "spirituality," the emergence of the pharmaceutical industry and its introduction of substance abuse, and the growing omnipresence of the media in society. The impressions his early films give is that individuals are powerless against their own cultural processes, as though human evolution has not yet found a way to control its own creations. *VIDEODROME* is this idea pushed to its farthest reaching and most explicit conclusion.

After *VIDEODROME*, nearly all of Cronenberg's movies were based on pre-existing sources. Many—*THE FLY*, *DEAD RINGERS*, *CRASH*, *M. MURPHY*, *EXISTENZ*—solidify Cronenberg's fascination with the transformation/mutation of the human body, but none is as imaginative or there is as great philosophical as *VIDEODROME*. The further he got from making "genre" movies, the more his intellectualism took over and the more his films lost the sense that they were guided by a passionate artist as opposed to a theoretician. *CRASH* and *RAVED LUNCH* were curiously somber versions of erotic fiction, and his two most originally acclaimed recent movies—*A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE* and *EASTERN PROMISES*—feel like awkward attempts to elude genre clichés, and out of touch with modern culture.

Did he say all he had to say with *VIDEODROME*? By that point he had critical acceptance of his work as both devoted to his films, "The Shape of Rage" was published in 1983, the admiration of his fellow genre directors, a stable cult following among the movie going public, and studio support. His two immediate follow-ups, *THE DEAD RINGERS* and *THE FLY*, were commercially crushed but added nothing new to the Cronenberg mythos, while *DEAD RINGERS* is a project he's been working on since the *VIDEODROME* era and almost literally described the clearing of his career into genre and art-house halves with the tale of described twin brothers. Despite this shift, *VIDEODROME*'s main themes never completely disappeared from his films. *EXISTENZ* comes closest to updating this, and as the only script penned by the director himself since *VIDEODROME*, it's clear they're still part of his concerns. It's just that he seems to have forgotten how to express them.

The Lums is the only writer who could have written this book. As a Baby Boomer "monster kid," he self-published introductory issues of two fanzines in the 1970's, a third was never distributed and spent his free time in Ohio moviehouses. He wrote for "Cinefantastique" for ten years at the start of his career and as a writer for that magazine was the only journalist permitted to spend time on *VIDEODROME*'s set. His article on the making of the film belatedly appeared in a bastardized version, which he disowned, and the original manuscript and interviews based on his set visit languished unseen for a quarter century. It was only after he struck out on his own that he found his own writing style and became the father of modern genre film writing, best described as cinematic without being academic (if still somewhat nerdy), as the "New Genre" once miffed and antisocialistic without being slavishly fanatical. Comparing running times between multiple versions of a movie, blaspheming the connections among personnel from film to film, and deriving the genealogy of influences on a film's story all helped permeate the video-watching experience and make up for the loss that occurred in the transition from the big screen to small in the 1980's. The isolation inherent in watching movies at home was lessened by the community of scholarship that sprang up among fanzine writers and readers and later on the Internet, and Lums's pivotal roles as expert and discussion leader—good God, twenty years after his first major frame article he can still muster 14,000 words for the year—helped set the parameters for the conversations this once disreputable type of cinematic fan with his fellow obsessives. In the years since his unhappy experience with "Cinefantastique's" treatment of his *VIDEODROME* article he's launched his own magazine, "Video Watchdog," in 1990, and in 2007 published the best book ever devoted to a single filmmaker, "Movie Stars: the Culture of the Dark." The incredibly researched "Movie book" took two decades to write and as a work of art is probably a greater achievement than any one of Lums's individual films. But after its publication and the 2008 release of his *VIDEODROME* book, Lums seems to have transformed in his own way. He still publishes and contributes to V8 but is less of an influence on its tone, and he's eschewed the magazine's proud tradition to a varied stable of contributors. His *Video Watchdog*, which he once complained was sucking dry the energy he used for the magazine, is rarely updated anymore, and he now seems to prefer the instantaneous (and largely uncritical) feedback of constant Facebook updates. In his editorial in *Video Watchdog* #255 he admits that his "passion for horror and fantasy stories has diminished over the past couple of years." Part of this "boredom" he chalks up to the publication of the *Movie book*, but relieving himself of the burden of *VIDEODROME*, which was his first on-set assignment as a writer, also seems to have closed a door. Fading from his online posts, he's more enthusiastic about music and script-writing today than the movies on which he built his reputation, and although he's not abandoned them, he seems as set on a different creative course after his *VIDEODROME* book as Cronenberg was after releasing his film. In true Cronenbergian fashion, Lums has adapted. "the process is still coming into focus"

WORLD ON A WIRE

By Greg Kikkers

I went to see *WELT AM INNEN* aka *WORLD ON A WIRE*, Fassbinder's 1973 TV movie at MOMA. 200 minutes in 2 parts and previously expurgated as it was only shown on German TV, but now it's on DVD in Europe. It's about a world within a computer world, and has been compared to *THE MATRIX*. Since the director has many fans, all the screenings were sold out. It was a mixed crowd, from the elderly to younger straighties. Like most lower-budgeted sci-fi films of Europe and the USA, there wasn't money to build fancy sets or for effects. Rather you're supposed to believe the surreal everyday scene is taking place within a computer, or spaceship, etc, which leads to commentary about what's real or a dream. There's also a lot of off-beat humor and some fight scenes. The injuries in the film are minimal, like when a tea or bricks falls on a woman, or when the main character tries to shoot his girlfriend with a rifle as she drives up to his house, saying he tried because he was scared. Each episode ends with the pleasant rock instrumental "Alteuropa," Fleetwood Mac's hit single from '69. Towards the end, during the shootout, one person's cell phone kept ringing. The T-Mobile song which led to screams and yells to shut up. Then during a chase shot of the bullet-riddled body, the phone rang again and immediately there were 15 groans in unison. It went well with the shot!

Reel Tragedy

NYU FILM STUDENT JUMPS TO DEATH

Tragedy struck Tuesday night when a man jumped to his death from the roof of a Greenwich Village apartment building just after 11:00pm. Police identified the victim as Edward Berenson, 26, a second year film student at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Residents of the building don't recall seeing Berenson before, and it is not known how he gained access to the roof. The roof of the eight story building has only one access door, which is always kept locked.

Seventh floor resident Robert Roseman was home at the time. "The people above us were at Film Forum, and I live alone and rarely get phone calls, so I could hear the sounds in the roof very clearly. I had just started watching the new *Magnum Obsession* set from Criterion when I heard what sounded like someone kicking a door, followed by incoherent weeping. I guess I could have stopped him, but I was so entranced by the stylish excesses of *VOLENTINE AT NOON* that I ignored it. I really had to turn up the volume because his sobbing was distracting me from paying proper attention to the subtitles."

Arthur Roseman and his wife Kathryn Leverman, one floor beneath Roseman, also missed the tragedy. "It was my turn to cook dinner for us, and I'd made a wonderful *dag au vin*, with *Turle aux Poisses*, my specialty, for dessert," Arthur stated. "After that we split a fine bottle of chockenay while watching the *Four Silver Green STATE OF FLAT*, and afterward we discussed the moral and social implications of the film, like we always do." Their passion made them miss the suicide. "Our conversations often get heated when we hash these things out, so I'm not surprised we didn't notice anything. Kathryn's heart is in the right place, but her view of the effects of proprietary corporate technologies on communities of color is so early 2000's."

Kathryn Leverman was relieved she missed the suicide. "Arthur lives in a fantasy world where the Constitution has surely been shredded, not obliterated. The next thing you know he'll be justifying the Detroit riot or border enforcement. We just consider ourselves lucky that our baby didn't happen to look out the window and see it," she said in reference to the two year old Belgian couple in her area. "The world have kept us up all night with her crying. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you? Oh yes, you would have, you big girl you."

Police received a flurry of 911 calls immediately after the event, and multiple eyewitnesses have come forward to provide additional details. Although no one on the ground was injured by Berenson's eight story plunge, two female students walking nearby at the moment of impact were splattered with grime and taken to Bellevue overnight for psychiatric evaluation.

Jason Farley and her husband live on the fifth floor and saw Berenson fall past their window. "We'd just ordered *GI JOE* from On Demand and as I got up to get *Drug* another beer I happened to look out the window and saw something so past really fast I thought it was a bag of garbage or something," Mrs. Farley, who is five months pregnant, stated. "I didn't realize it was a person, or that all the police were there," she added. "Because, Jesus Christ, that movie is loud." Ms. Farley suspects the sound of Berenson's body hitting the sidewalk may have been covered by one of his own fortuitously timed belches.

The eyewitness with the clearest view was Kyle Black, 20, who recently lost his job at NYU's Purple Violet Cafi and lives on the floor below the Farleys. "I know I shouldn't say this, but it was pretty fucking cool. I mean, it's sad and all that shit, but like, I love horror movies and always wondered what a real dead body looked like. I just finished *HOUSE OF THE DEVIL*, you know, that Ty Burrell thing, and it was such a relief. I probably should have noticed that our Needy Eli Bay but whatever. Anyway, I heard this *splat* and was like, Holy shit and ran to my window and the first thing I thought of was that *Barcel* movie where they throw the baby out the window and the sidewalk has this busted watercolor." Black claims to have seen Berenson actually fall past his window. "It was weird, he went down fast first and was totally stiff like he was Michael Myers or something from, you know, *Rob Reiner's HALLOWEEN*. I swear his eyes were open and he was looking in my window as he went past. I guess I'm just lucky I wasn't jacking it. Though I guess it wouldn't matter."

Third floor resident Geraldine DeBrennona was also oblivious to the scene outside, despite the fact that bass fragments and an eyeball bounced off her window. "Then I'm watching my show, nothing can distract me, not even if Chris Rock himself were to my door." While people screamed and ambulances whizzed, "Smoking Dad" had DeBrennona enraptured. "Now that *96* and *Loft* are over, I'm only left with this. *Red Sun*, *Revenge*, *Teeds*, *True Blood*, *Emp*, *Purified*, *Sons of Anarchy*, and *Rip/Tank*. I don't have time to worry about what's outside when what's happening here week to week is so much more interesting."

Donetta Tyson Jones, on the second floor, did not want to speak about what she saw. "Fuck uh, I didn't see nothing," she said through the two inch gap she allowed between her door and the frame. And I didn't take this chain off." She later stated off the record that her daughter and some friends were watching *American Idol* when the tragedy occurred and did not hear the commotion.

Ground floor newbyeds Chuck and Heidi Tupperman were both home at the time. "Those damn kids upstairs were singing and dancing around, so I couldn't hear anything." She sighed. "I got as tired of asking fans of *American Idol* and the viewers after season four. There is no shortage of American stupidity available on television, but ultimately you just have to say, I'm above even asking fans of this. I mean, it's clear now that even the best long form dramas are soap operas for college grads."



The Screamproof Coffin



Casting a critical eye on modern low-budget horror movies

By RJ Shepperson

G. BAKED

Richard Kelly's *DONNIE DAKHO* was a science-fiction version of 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' for 21st century audiences insured to the trick ending of *Narcosis* sloop. In keeping with our overexposed age of information, it gave its main character the self-awareness to know he was trapped in his death-dream but denied him the power to save himself from it. John Cullumhead starred as Donnie, a steady teen suspected of having schizophrenia, who slowly came to the realization that the world around him was not the "primary universe" but a "tangent" one created by a surrealism in time, and that he alone had the ability to stop the two universes from destroying each other, at the cost of his life.

Although the sci-fi underlining the story remains obscure even after several viewings, *DAKHO* ultimately worked because it perfectly captured the carelessness of teenagers trying to navigate the identity creation process of high school. On the next basic level it was a coming-of-age film, wittily showing how teenagers go from believing themselves to be the center of the universe to absorbing into the realization that they're not so important after all and that life will go on without them. Donnie's growing recognition of his temporary reprieve from death was also Kelly's personal retelling of the end of his own teenage years and the culture that ostracized them. Set in the late 1990s, just before *The Digital Age*, Donnie's America is simpler and almost unrecognizably different from the country today. The film was set in an upper-middle-class world where cellphones, the World Wide Web and racial diversity are unknown, but like its teenage characters, it's on the cusp of change. Chesterfield County, VA, where Kelly grew up, went from being 60% white in 1990 to 50% today. Kelly's greatest feat is that he managed to distill his adult nostalgia into a four-week period obscuring on that most childish of holidays, Halloween.

G. BAKED was made in 2000 but it was fourteen years earlier, in July, 1986, just as the original was set thirteen years before its autumn 2001 release. It's less a sequel than a rewrite of the original, told from a different character's perspective. In the first film, Donnie's girlfriend Gretchen had to die in the parallel universe so he'd be compelled to sacrifice his own life in the primary one to save her, and thus the world. The sequel tells the same story from the perspective of Gretchen's character: our protagonist Samantha, Donnie's sister, must die in order for returned Gulf War veteran Iraq Jack (this film's "Donnie") to get killed in a motor shower, thus film's version of the first's jet engine. Washed-up actress Elizabeth Berkley plays Trudy, a child-killing Christian fundamentalist who's essentially the same character as washed-up actor Patrick Dewey's paternal character Jim Cunningham in the original film, and in both films the main character has his or her God-damned rule-Samantha as a "Manipulated Living" and Donnie as a "Living Rescuer." In the film's terminology-in writing the universe made clear to those in a movie theater, using the distinction between what's being projected on the movie screen and the audience watching it to illustrate the film's idea of two parallel universes, one real and one not.

While the sequel's script obviously understands the rules that Kelly laid out for his twin universes in the first film, it lacks the bounding specificity of character and setting that gave the original life worth. The things that Kelly mourns for in the vanished culture of the 1990's carry dramatic weight because they were particular to that time and to the awareness of those who lived through them, while the 1990's have remained stubbornly resistant to nostalgia even after fifteen years. *G. BAKED* is not a commentary on the hardness of post-1990's culture but a product of it, set in a small town in Utah that could have existed in any of the past five decades. Like too many horror movies, it drops its characters into a generic small town with stock characters, making it difficult to care about the end of the universe in a place where time seems to have already stopped.

It's not as though the elements aren't there in the sequel for a vision as personal as the first's. Samantha and her best friend Cory are as a road trip from Virginia to Los Angeles to find jobs as doctors, previously in a strip club. It's inferred early on that the Darko family was shattered by Donnie's death and that Samantha is seeking at the earliest possible opportunity from a screwed-up teen life. She and Cory are faithful representatives of the type of naive but damaged teens who still believe the fantasy of L.A. as a place that will free them from their unhappy reality. Kids like that pick up and head out west to escape their demons but usually end up running into the arms of stronger and more dangerous versions of them. But Hollywood can only continue to exist as long as it can convincingly sell the fantasy.

After getting stranded in Utah along the way, the girls realize that despite their friendship, their destinies are meant to diverge, and Samantha eventually returns to Virginia while Cory, clearly the more damaged of the two, cloaks to stay behind and commit himself to what can only be described as a hopelessly white trash future. The girls character soon make a nice coming-of-age compliment to Donnie, although the girls are ultimately denied the kind of closure that Donnie received in his final hours. The film's problem isn't the girls character, which are sharply defined, but rather the lack of credible interactions with people along the way who will challenge their authoritative-figure like Coachpiss and Drew Barrymore's teacher character to open their eyes, or important sexual relationships that push their emotional depth. Like Donnie's with Gretchen. Instead, the Utah townspeople have a 1990's-lyndonian quirkiness that even Lynch had outgrown by the time *WILLOWAY DRIVE*, his own film about a damaged woman swooping to a hellish L.A., was finished.

The film's most interesting narrative device, and its widest derivation from the original, comes when Samantha is unexpectedly killed by a car and Corey temporarily takes over as the parallel universe of her own. The film's use of two parallel universes is a welcome expansion of the rules laid down in *DOUBT* and a sign of the faith the filmmakers had in its audience. But the film's overall lack of a personal vision similar to Kelly's allows for several missteps in tone and presentation. No other film in recent memory has pondered so shamelessly to commentators of the teenage alibi or so relentlessly exploited the bodies of girls it was supposedly trying to build sympathy for. There's no nudity, but most scenes feature the girls wandering around in the slenderness of outfits for the filmmaker of *recess*. This lasciviousness, along with the film's fashionable Christian-bashing and poorly realized representations of its sci-fi phenomena, are constant reminders that the (very much male) personal behind the scenes have a completely different approach to the material from Kelly, staying true to his ideas while expanding upon them but missing their compelling autobiographical import.

BRENNAN'S BIRDS AND THINGS

James Nguyen's *BRENNAN* is irredeemably bad, a sub-sequence home video with the outlined addition to be a socially conscious horror movie. Narratively and structurally it's a creative distillation of *THE BIRDS*, with a slow-building first half that follows the burgeoning romance between its leads in extraneous detail, while occasionally dropping in foreboding scenes involving sick or misbehaving birds and a second half that has the now-unlucky couple fixating for safety. *BRENNAN* has picked up a small cult following mainly for its incompetent special effects, which make the effects in *THE SHIRT CLAY* look like *JURASSIC PARK*'s in comparison. Pitiably for a movie about birds that attack and kill people, there are no close-ups of the birds actually attacking and killing people, and in wide shots the birds look like they've been generated by a computer program designed by little children. Hey do the birds act like any bird you've ever seen act, unless you've seen birds that would eat, swoop out of the sky to slit people's throats, or make gas stations pump explode by dive bombing into them. Most of the time they just hover in place, not unlike the actors, as though waiting for direction.

Every other technical credit in the movie is just as unprofessional, which is almost laughable in an age where teenagers on home computers can seamlessly edit picture and sound and digital cameras good enough for network television are available for rent. Thomas Hitchcock kept muting off the soundtrack during his attack scenes to heighten the birds' terrifying screaming. Nguyen mouths lines with synthesizer, sometimes repeating the same short cue over and over until the viewer is begging for the birds to win so the scene will end.

Hitchcock also refrained from giving a reason for the birds' attacks, which absolved his leads from having to find a solution to stop them. Nguyen takes the opposite track, making it clear from the outset that man-made global warming is the culprit, and then tries to explain to *Brennan* how to properly live their lives. Global warming and net horror movies are obviously Nguyen's real passions, and it's the hilariously unstable way he shoehorns it into every scene that's funny, not the high school level filmmaking. Fear eager to embrace *BRENNAN* for its pure badness will deny this, but such scenes have actually been carefully thought out in order to hamper the audience over the head with a message of environmental reconciliation between Man and Nature. This ridiculous construction doesn't make it good, of course—it makes it wonderfully awful in the way that slappy propaganda always is. Despite its awful delivery from Hitchcock, the real inspiration for *BRENNAN* are "house films" like *JOHN Q* and *THE GREEN MILE*. What would have been the subject in a well-written film (think *LOVE WEEKEND*) is shoved like stuff under the doorway viewer's nose here until it blows out everything else, including suspense, character development, and drama.

Like a 19th century novel in which every chapter is a step toward Christian redemption for its sinning young protagonist, every scene here tearfully guides Rod as his glibberistic progress from an environmentally unaware dilettante to a self-sufficient fisherman and child of nature. A dream-out early scene shows Rod get in his car, back out of his driveway, drive to a gas station, get out, pump gas, get back in, and drive away. This scene is completely pointless unless the viewer realizes it's paired with a later one where Rod's held up by a motorist stranded by the road and desperate for gas. When the helping car is killed by a bird, Rod gets back in his car and drives off without his gas can, showing us he's no longer "addicted to oil," so hypocritical satire. types like to put it.

Other scenes intended to maximize use of his social responsibility show his negotiating the purchase of a solar panel for sixteen thousand dollars, asking a pair of venture capitalists he's invited to his office for a two million dollar investment in cheap consumer-grade solar panels using AN INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY in the theater and pointing it afterward and talking to a trendy anthropologist who lectures them about man's culpability in nature's disasters, which plays like an unintentional parody of the "Professor Exposition" characters in *FILM* and *FI* films.

Because it uses *THE BIRDS* as a template, *BRENNAN*'s flaws are similar to those in Hitchcock's film, only magnified. In issue three of "*BRENNAN OF THE DEER*" January 1964, editor John Ryan reviews *THE BIRDS* and pinpoints what those problems are. Although he concludes it "contains many blunders, shocking scenes of birds seeming to attack people," and that "the efforts are ghastly and weirdly fascinating," Ryan is likewise on it overall, feeling "this picture needs but one thing to make it one of 'Hitchcock's greatest'—a plot. It is more like a tour through a war museum without a guide than a motion picture. One shudders from one shock to another; there is no substantial plot to provide a smooth transition from one 'bird scene' to another."

Although essentially correct, Ryan's critique stings today because *THE BIRDS* is now regarded as a classic. Reading critical contemporary reviews of classic movies is disconcerting because it undermines the foundations upon which the medium is built, time buries the films of a future classic while a re-evaluation diminishes its importance. One of the reasons *THE BIRDS* is now a classic is because it's yet to be superseded—of the "wild nature" films, only *JARVIS* competes.

If *THE BIRDS* a place in film history is secure, so is *BRENNAN*'s, unfortunately. The TV revolution as sold to us by the techno-geeks who now consider the film industry was supposed to bring artistic freedom to the thousands of outcast authors who, freed from the expensive necessity of shooting and editing on film, could bypass studios, form groups, and even writing themselves and make

and distributable movies without unattractive interferences. But ten years after the ELAIN WITCH PROJECT was the first to capitalise on this premise, the most successful follow-up was 2004's PARANORMAL ACTIVITY, which closely mimicked both ELAIN WITCH's found footage concept and its savvy marketing campaign. KNOXVILLE, mainstream Hollywood's version of ELAIN WITCH, had a similarly "interactive" marketing campaign, suggesting the filmmakers' lack of faith in their audience's willingness to pay for ninety minutes of shaky handheld footage; in reality, the most notable homegrown genre movies of the decade, WORMS, MURDER BY MEN, and REVENGEANCE OF EVIL, were shot on film in what now seems like an act of defiance against the seemingly endless number of self-indulgent DVD movies the likes of which even iTunes would be too embarrassed to distribute. By the end of the first decade of digital freedom, nearly every indie-film distributor was either shattered or subsumed within a major, print publications like FILM TREASURY and PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO had shut down, and consequently, big budget Hollywood horror movies were more popular than ever while films of a more individual nature were stuffed down the Netflix hole without fanfare.

REVENGEANCE's bricole-like characteristics beyond shocking its message at viewers signifies one more retreat from independently made films' usefulness as an alternative to the increasingly homogenised mainstream. Like the start up showmen asking one--reviewer one hundred years ago, Nguyen is trying to leave the basic language of movies the best way to shoot an action scene, to show two people talking, and to write a third act that doesn't go on too long or come too obvious. And without those fundamentals, all the dopes in the world can't create something worthy of respect. Of course, not every digital feature is as bad as REVENGE, which is an outlier even by the pretty low standards of the medium. One happy example of an indie DVD horror film that works is

POP SKULL

an experimental mood piece shot for \$2000 in Birmingham, Alabama. Its center of gravity is Daniel, a college age dropout who's just been dumped by his girlfriend. This is the first real breakup Daniel's been through, and it's drives him into a existentially powered depression, which finds him sleeping late, moping around the house with his guitar and dalling his nose with OWS and all-day pills from CVS that leave him in a constant daze. The pills may also be giving him hallucinations starring the two former owners of his parents' house, who years ago killed a girl in the backyard before committing suicide. And if it's not the pills, he's in real trouble, because they seem intent on compelling him to follow in their footsteps.

The "mistake mistakes for wisdom" theme is a familiar one, and DORRIS DANKO casts its shadow over the film, especially in Daniel's consciousness eating blackouts and hallucinations he even wakes up by the side of the road at one point and in specific shots where he glowers up at the camera as though possessed. But POP SKULL avoids DANKO's melancholy and gets inside Daniel's head in a way Billy's sociology and nostalgia held the viewer at a sentimental distance from Dennis. Instead, Daniel's part of the artistic tradition of fragile young men like Quentin Chapone who lack the social skills to fit in to examine Southern culture. He's got the dramatic voice and slow witted thought processes of a poethead, and the slightly rocking tone the movie takes toward his saddest state is his clearest devotion (I hope he dies in a rock climbing accident) is one of the most unexpectedly wonderful lines of narrative, even if he doubts in the end he's earned it but looks the satisfaction or solution is actually finish anything, and there's a ring of truth to his madman evidence that movies usually miss by trying to define their characters too uniquely. He seems content to spend his life in his small town and gradually erode away before disappearing from the earth altogether. Sensitive and heart-broken, Daniel captures the lovelorn confusion of being a teenager as well that when the horror finally comes it feels like an injustice.

It's important to bring up the South's identity in the arts when writing about POP SKULL because the movie captures its sense of place better than most films do, and without having it up to meet outsiders' expectations. Southerners often have a hard time writing about movies or novels set in the South without being uncomfortable, since our perception of it is largely formed by stereotypes filtered through experts with grudges or simplifications based on the moral superiority that coastal people project through their own arts. Non southerners tend to look critically at the real South while simultaneously romanticizing it in their books and movies as a bucolic, relaxing utopia where everyone's friendly. Judged through the prism of Southerners' preconceived notions, Alabama is second from the bottom of negatively stereotyped states, above only West Virginia, a mixture of vaguely remembered civil rights protests, good ol' boy attitudes and overweight, ignorant flag waving Bible beltters. Despite some tortoise generalisations--it rains again the worst states in education, obesity and poverty--generalisations are always imprecise, and Birmingham has a small but thriving art scene, which probably helps account for why POP SKULL feels as compelling and cutting edge as it does despite being set out in the country.

POP SKULL's strong sense of place is reminiscent of older genre filmmaking, which also lacked the regional #01F--consciousness that the modern artistic mindset mistakes for a marketing tool. Director Adam Wagnard has obviously been in Daniel's shoes, and POP SKULL is distinct enough from typical genre fare to appeal primarily to those who have been there too. It will not appeal to young males too insecure to have had the ability to admit to having had similar feelings, and older viewers reminded of foregone dreams, whose memories of youthful heartache he buried under years of settling for the safety of routines, will no doubt mistake the intensity of Daniel's pain for bathos. It asks of the viewer an open--mindedness and heartlessness that sadism, and especially horror sadism, talked into cynicism and passivity by Hollywood's marketers, have grown wary of and resistant to.

Though POP SKULL succeeds at many elements that are difficult to pull off, not everything works. The rapid--fire editing during Daniel's frenzies earned the film a pre--credit warning to epileptic but don't convincingly convey his state of mind, coming off as show--offy.

It ends with the scene of violence that the movie's been slowly building up to as well--headed at nearly everything preceding it. The murder isn't played for thrills. It's grisly and grisly but oddly awe-like, scored to a slow--burning "Are Maria" on the sound--track. His subsequent panic and refuge in the end plan he feels safe ring true; the arc of his crime has the banality of a story ripped from the kind of lurid "True Crime" magazines that once floundered, only here it's told from the killer's perspective. Unfortunately, the closing shot of his wide eyes feels like the kind of last second pining shot that more glib horror movies end with.

Ah, poor Daniel! Every man has been a Daniel at some point, and the feeling of "I can't believe it's over" is probably not such

different from the incredulity one would feel at seeing a ghost, POP SHELL doesn't believe we exist, but a broken heart and spectral beings are both nearly—physical manifestations of loss; each seems completely real without actually being corporeal. Like a ghost, the presence of an absent loved one truly is haunting, and rare is the film that understands this.

Serializing DEATH AT LOVE HOUSE 25 years later

By Greg Eklare

Most everyone can remember seeing a film at a young age and having it affect them. Whether it was scary or funny, it's always interesting to see it again as an adult to see how it compares to your initial viewing.



DEATH AT LOVE HOUSE was released in 1996 as a TV movie. Directed by veteran TV director EN Beckhouse, it stars Kate Jackson and Robert Wagner as a couple moving into an odd Hollywood mansion. The house was previously owned by Lorne Love, a silent film star who had been killed in a fire in the house. It turns out that Love was part of a black magic cult and Wagner's father had had an affair with Love back in her 1920's and 1930's heyday and had gone under the influence of some of her spells. Pretty soon, odd things start happening in the house and we see that Lorne Love seems to still be alive and has now be stitched to the son, Wagner. There are many creepy scenes, such as the discovery of the cult by specialist John Garredine, who is then killed by a fear infused heart attack brought on by the sight of seeing a hooded cult member approaching his next to a fountain in a night thunderstorm. This reminds me now of a scene in the 2004 video game 'Resident Evil 4'. Another scene has a girl's face falling off, revealing it was a disguise that Love was wearing, a

scene similar to the one that would appear years later in the 'Bello Grantini' sequence of HALLOWEEN III.

I watched DEATH AT LOVE HOUSE 25 years after I first viewed it on TV and still found it creepy and effective. Though certainly not as terrifying as I remembered, it was still strong for a TV movie, even by the high quality standards of TV movies in the 90's.

In the summer of 1983, I had just finished first grade and DEATH AT LOVE HOUSE was on TV late at night. I watched it with my dad, winding up, and since we got sucked into the story, we did not speak to each other. At the commercial breaks it would show upcoming scenes from later in the film, the most prominent of which was the reveal at the end, of Lorne Love's burned, melted face being shown weeping in the hot next to Wagner. I thought nothing of it, and watched the film from the beginning. Creepy scenes followed, like the reveal of Love's preserved body in the garden. In that scene, Wagner and Jackson are being shown the house and he sees Love running by a fountain, so he follows her and finds the wax-preserved body, which terrifies Jackson by looking so young. All was fine with me during the movie, but after the 4" or 5" showing of the melted face during the commercial break, a

paralyzing fear came over me in anticipation of that scene. Why? I had seen the shot several times already, but perhaps in the context of the whole story it built up fear inside me. The film ends with them finding her, but she dies in another conflagration scene. 'Goody Bye' was on afterwards so I realized that to make out, but it was a futile effort. I was too terrified to sleep, so my mother sat in a chair next to my bed to comfort me. She quickly fell asleep and, turning over, I saw her burned head and hair and it was the same shot from the film that had terrified me. I didn't sleep that night, and the next day we had a sleepover at the day camp I was attending. The camp's plan was to sleep in sleeping bags on the limestone floor of the rec room. I was too tired from being awake the entire night before so I fell asleep pretty early and missed the handouts of outrageous graham crackers that I so loved. The next morning, lucky girls told me that I had "slept like a baby."



By M. Whelan

In an old issue of "Herald Express," Bill Leach once wrote about "the girls who appear in second string strike magazines, turn up in newspaper sales roles in exploitation movies, and sometimes even fly up credited like dirty hussies playing cards in the background of major studio movies." Beverly Elaine Adland, who died from complications of diabetes and congestive heart failure on January 3, was one of those girls.

Beverly was born in Hollywood on September 16th, 1941. Her father, Herbert, was a native of Roberts County, South Dakota who had migrated to Los Angeles and worked as a bartender. Her mother, Florence, had come from Texas during the Depression to be a dancer. In 1939 she lost her mother and her right leg in an auto accident, and as soon as Beverly was born transferred her siblings into her daughter. At six months old Beverly was already posing for ads, and briefly hosted the "Tasty Soap Baby." At two she was in dance classes and at three she had not part in movies. At seven she appeared in the independent movie THE SECOND FACE and at twelve she got a part in THE HOUSE CARPENTER STORIES at Warner Bros. Even at this young age her measurements were 34-35-34, and as her mother explained, "by the time she was 11 she had a woman's body—a child's face, but a woman's body," which undoubtedly helped her win "Little Miss America" at 15. Small roles in SCORN PATRIOT and TWO WOMEN, TWO SOONS followed, the latter as ironic bit of casting since it told the ordinary true life tale of Dick Barrymore, an actress whose burgeoning career was not short by drugs and alcohol.

Beverly grew up without youth. It was later alleged in a Juvenile Court petition that she had been a \$100-a-trick prostitute from the age of 18 and regularly went out unsupervised with older men. But this eventual slide into sexual delinquency changes was temporarily slowed by a fortuitous meeting with a faded Hollywood star. While working as a dancer on the Gene Kelly movie HANCOCK HARRINGTON in 1950, the fifteen year old Beverly met Errol Flynn, who was nearly fifty at the time. A whirlwind romance began, but unlike the relationships that led to Flynn's arrest for statutory rape in the 1940's, the Flynn-Adland coupling got the approval of Beverly's mother Flo, who saw it as a wonderful way to further her daughter's career. Unfortunately, it proved to be the final straw for Herbert, who divorced Flo and moved to New York.



Beverly and Flynn, now an alcoholic prone to getting arrested for stripping nude in public while wasted, traveled the world for a few brief, wild years. He took her to Africa while he made THE HOUSE OF HEAVEN with Grace Kelly for John Huston. It was on that set that he caught the malaria that would kill him a year later, but for his last year he and Beverly lived like they would live forever. They went to the ranch on his island hideaway in Jamaica when they weren't in Cuba, where they made what would become his final movie, CRYAN RINGS. This was just before Batista was overthrown, and William Randolph Hearst had paid Flynn to write some articles about the young revolutionary Castro. On New Year's Eve of 1959, the night before Batista's regime toppled, Beverly was alone in a Havana casino fronted by George Raft for the Mafia when Castro's forces invaded. She escaped through a kitchen door and made it back to her hotel alone.

The teenagers went through Flynn's remaining time and money like a yeast through water. When he died of a heart attack in Vancouver that October, the now seventeen year old Beverly cradled his head in her lap as his troubles ended. Unfortunately, hers were just beginning.

At the time of his death, Beverly claimed Flynn had been trying to make LULITA with her. "Maybe I'll do it anyway, but it would have been a hell of a lot of fun doing it with him," she claimed. But there would be no more movies, the press, retirement about the relationship while Flynn was alive, paid on after his death. Beverly was not invited to his stag-studded funeral, with the eulogy by Jack Warner and the Forest Lawn service, but she made a quick exit from by selling the details of her affair to the "London Daily Sketch." She also procured an unsigned codicil to Flynn's will, written in an Havana hotel room as Castro's forces approached, that procured her one third of his estate, but the court deemed it worthless.

Less than five months after Flynn died, Flo filed suit against Jack Dulis, a 38 year old Beverly flake skin diving equipment dealer, claiming he was trying to lure her previous, underage daughter away from her. When the suit was thrown out, Flo showed up drunk at Dulis's and he shot at her. She was bodied on an intoxication charge and he got a citation for illegal discharge of a weapon. The fact that Beverly wasn't even with Dulis that night didn't stop the papers from focusing on her quick rebound, but it was her next affair that would really make headlines.

William Staebli was born in Chicago in 1929 and had a troubled childhood. By 18 he'd been arrested in Chicago for burglary, and then later in San Diego for the same. By the time he got to Los Angeles he'd decided to become an actor but was working in a factory until that dream came true. He was 30 when he met Beverly and was living with his brother Kenneth and widowed mother in a bungalow at 1135 North Dolomite Place in West Hollywood. With his youth, long hair, and bodybuilder physique, it's no mystery why Beverly fancied him, but what isn't known is exactly what happened between them that early April.

Beverly and William spent every night together for six weeks. Toward the end of their romance, Flo caught them cooking and tried to intervene. She kicked William in the face with her wooden leg and he back-headed her in the jaw, sending her to the hospital. A few days later, while Flo was still in the hospital, Beverly rushed out of her apartment at 5 a.m. screaming for the police. The cops

man and friend William on the bed, nude except for his black underwear around one ankle, a 30 bullet hole in his right temple. Beverly's first story was that he came over at 830 a.m., forced his way in, and then shot himself when she refused his offer of marriage. His family and friends disputed her story, and it seemed inconsistent with the couple's public behavior the past six weeks. When he died in the prison ward at L.A. General Hospital the next morning (where he'd been locked on suspicion of raping her), Beverly was sent to Juvenile Hall as an unsupervised juvenile, and the court took action to remove her from her mother's custody.

Beverly took a lie detector test but the results were not released. Chief of Detectives Ted Brown stated that the autopsy results indicated the gunshot wound was not of the contact variety, and Beverly recalled her initial story. Now she claimed William had raped her, and when he reached for the gun on the floor beside them, she struggled with him for it until it accidentally went off.

Three days later, a mutual friend named Bob Proctor went to the papers with a clutch of photographs he'd taken at an Oakland party two weeks before William's death. The pictures showed Fia, Beverly and four young underdressed men drunkenly partying in nothing but their underwear. The most infamous photo shows Beverly clutching a wine bottle in her left hand while getting punched in the face by her mother. Another photo shows Beverly punching her mother in return. Still more photos were deemed too explicit to release.

The pictures hit the paper the day of Beverly's court hearing. The judge decided Fia was unfit as a guardian and Beverly was taken from her mother. Fia was convicted of contributing to Beverly's delinquency, but her 90 day sentence was later modified to a \$200 fine. Then she was arrested for drunkenness the next year, however, a judge vacated the order, claiming she'd violated her parole, and she was sentenced to 90 days after all.



In 1960 Fia put the story of Beverly's affair with Flynn down on tape and worked with a reporter to turn it into a book. THE RED LOVE got a rave review by William Styron in "Nyx" and has since become a trash classic, although Beverly never forgave her mother for doing it. It went out of print for many years before suddenly resurfacing in 1984, when in the immediate post-MONIE DEMENT era, there was a sudden demand for all kinds of mother memoirs. Five years after its reprinting, it was turned into a one-woman off-Broadway show starring Tracey Ullman, but quickly closed after receiving terrible reviews. A second book, THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS (1996), co-written by Fia in the last year of her life, was a final desperate attempt to capitalize on the quickly forgotten family name. It has fallen into total obscurity.

Severe of drinking did its work, and Fia died of cirrhosis of the liver and hepatitis in May 1996, while Beverly's father lived to 1976.

After being separated from her mother, Beverly's career never recovered. She wasn't charged in William's death, and was placed by the court under the care of a church chaplain's wife. When she came of age she served time to be a nightclub performer, but eventually returned to Los Angeles, where she married and divorced twice before meeting Ronald Fisher, an actor/paleo-medicine, while working as a cocktail waitress. She and Fisher married and moved to Glendale, where he "converted her into a housewife," as he told the L.A. Times for her obituary.

In the early 1990's they settled in Palmdale, back when it was a distant desert town with a population of ten thousand, before the purge followed the Section 8 vouchers and ballooned the city to its present drug-riddled hellscape of one hundred and forty thousand. Beverly and Ronald stayed married for forty years and she kept out of the public's eye except for a brief interview with "People Magazine" in 1995. They had a daughter, Adelaide Joy, who is thirty this year and who has a daughter of her own.

Once upon a time these stories of people who sidetrack Hollywood greatness and fame without necessarily possessing any greatness or fame themselves appeared regularly in the movie MIMIC. Beverly's story differs from theirs only in that her personal misfortune was to live the dream that others spend their lives chasing. The rest of her story—the turn of the ordinary parolee from forgotten pioneer towns who left for Los Angeles to join in the simultaneous creation of a city, a culture and an industry; the calculating youthful ambition to succeed at any cost, without realizing how high those costs could run; and the sad discovery that the glamour behind the city, the culture and the industry has always been false—is duplicated in the family histories of literally millions of other twentieth century American migrants who went West for a while and then fell back, slipping away when the dream lost its magic hold.

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